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# CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ.

By LAURA C. HOLLOWAY.

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AN HOUR

WITH

CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ;

OR,

FLOWERS FROM A YORKSHIRE MOOR.

BY

LAURA C. HOLLOWAY

AUTHOR OF "LADIES OF THE WHITE HOUSE," ETC., ETC.

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*"A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller between life and death :  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;  
A perfect woman, nobly planned  
To warn, to comfort, and command ;  
And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light."*

—WORDSWORTH.

*"Pass in, pass in, the angels say,  
Into the upper doors,  
Nor count compartments of the floors,  
But mount to Paradise  
By the stairway of surprise."*

—EMERSON.



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## CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ.

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THE story of Charlotte Bronté's life is one of the most fascinating in our language. The English reading world is acquainted with her novels, and many have enjoyed "*Jane Eyre*" as much perhaps as did a mother of several grown-up daughters who took the book from one of them with a reproof for reading a novel—something she had never done, and who was discovered in the night poring over it. She had opened it to see what it was, and had remained up all night to settle the question for herself.

The author of this novel was a mere reed, physically—a woman frail yet strong, spiritual yet still indomitable. Few if any stronger women have possessed her power of endurance; her patient inflexibility. She had a rare and an unusual development, and her domestic life was one of the most singular ever known. She was born at Thornton, in Yorkshire, England, the 21st day of April, 1816, and was the third of six children. Her father, Patrick Bronté, was an Episcopal clergyman, who for more than forty years was settled at Haworth, in Yorkshire.

The impossibility of learning the particulars of Charlotte Bronté's life while she lived added increased interest to the

story after she died, and yet it is but just now that all the real facts and true history of this wonderful woman are known. To understand her life it must be studied in the integrity of its relations, for the life of one human being cannot be considered apart from its connection with other lives, and be understood aright. It is but one of many fibres that form a strange and complex web, tangled by destiny and separated only by death.

Her life history ought to be written in tears, so sad was it. But if, as we are told, the capacity to suffer is the mark of rank in nature, she occupied her right place. She was wonderfully blessed with great intellectual gifts, and hence her domestic surroundings seemed all the more narrow and contracted. In the years that have passed since she died, all the brightness that could be gleaned from whatever legitimate source has been thrown upon the sad story, yet it remains as cruel as an olden tragedy twined into English fact.

Her gifts were higher than intellectual culture and reflection ; they were spiritual, akin to the prophetic. She was psychological and clairvoyant—the most exquisite and sensitive of human beings.

With her mind she could see, independent of the organs of vision ; and her wonderful intuitive powers invested her with a knowledge of human nature incompatible with the restricted life she led. And, though restricted, there was a sombre fascination in her isolated existence rendered eventful only by sorrow.

None of the accessories of wealth or high rank were hers ; it is her genius and her intensely pathetic domestic story that captivates the world and holds it, and will continue to captivate and hold it so long as men and women remain responsive to noble sentiment and appreciate true greatness.

The characteristic she possessed which men called genius she knew as courage and determined will, and the early consecration of her life to others she considered duty, not self-sacrifice.

The solitude of a gray old parsonage nursed her imaginative faculty, and in the absolute dearth of society she learned to think and to write. She lost her mother when she was five years old, and was left the care-taker of her younger sisters and brother, after the two eldest sisters had been sent away to school. Mr. Bronté did not know how to undertake the care and education of so many children, but he was a student himself and enforced his Spartan ideas of study upon his willing pupils. Fortunately, they were all the inheritors of his intellectual tastes, and to this circumstance they owed all the pleasure they enjoyed.

None of them had any childhood or knew how to be merry, and on one occasion they suffered severe mortification in consequence of their ignorance. The children of the parish were invited to the parsonage on a memorable afternoon, and when they had come Charlotte and her sisters were in despair. Their guests knew nothing but childish sports, and the Bronté children did not know how to play. Very gravely Charlotte asked to be taught, and the guests, instead of having a nice visit, devoted the time to missionary work trying to teach the grave children of the parsonage the plays of childhood. Time wasted evidently, for the young writers were only too glad to be left alone again with their busy pens and busier brains.

Of the mother of Charlotte Bronté there is little to be told, but that little is pleasant to record. She was a Yorkshire girl of excellent family, who married the handsome Irish curate soon after he settled in the village. Her married life was a brief one, spent in the care of her children and in fulfilling the

duties required of the wife of a minister. She was a sensitively organized woman, and was gifted with exceeding refinement and beauty of mind and person. From all that can be learned of her, it is surmised that she rather feared her excitable, irritable, yet brilliant husband, and was not quite so thoroughly understood as she deserved to be. Instances are recorded tending to show Mr. Bronté's unfortunate disposition to play the part of domestic tyrant, and nothing in the way of conduct could be more unattractive than this picture of him in that rôle. A relative of his wife had sent her a pretty figured dress over which her gentle heart had no doubt rejoiced in happy and harmless vanity. Seeing that its brightness gave offence to her husband, she carefully put it away in a bureau drawer out of his sight, but, as the sequel proved, not out of his remembrance. One day when she was lying in her darkened room enduring the tortures of a nervous headache, she heard Mr. Bronté's footsteps in the room overhead where her treasure had been placed and feared the effect upon him at such a time of its gay tints. It was as she dreaded it would be, and when next she saw her pretty gift it was a wreck. He had taken the scissors and cut it into shreds ! In like manner he had on a previous occasion burned the fancy colored shoes sent his little daughters by their aunt.

A martial way he had of relieving his anger and quieting his ruffled spirits that greatly annoyed his household. He would take his pistol into the yard and fire it off repeatedly in the air or at the barn-door, the latter being his favorite target. These explosive moods were less annoying to his daughters, however, than a certain cunning he would manifest on the most trivial occasions. Patient endurance was the only way to meet them, and he had no opposition from his gentle wife or timid children.

Hard work and too much of it exhausted the wife's delicate system, and she died when Charlotte was five years old. The two sisters older than Charlotte were put to a school kept for clergymen's daughters, and later, Charlotte and Emily were sent to join them. These two sisters both died from the treatment they received at this school, and it would have ended the lives of the younger girls if they had not been recalled. As it was, their health was permanently injured, and Charlotte, to the latest day of her life, had cause to remember it. The pupils all knew the pangs of unappeased hunger, and a feeling of nausea overcame her for years when she recalled the food she was compelled to eat there. This school was pictured in "*Jane Eyre*" as Cowan's Bridge, and the character of Helen Burns is an exact delineation of the eldest sister. Charlotte's wonderful power of reproducing character was admirably typified in this instance, and with so much success that all who were pupils there at the time at once recognized the sisters, and all the neighborhood immediately identified the school. Maria Bronté must have been as rare a character as either Charlotte or Emily. Her sensibility was extreme, and to a morbid conscientiousness she added a high degree of courage, and the indomitable spirit noticeable in Charlotte in later years. She was the best pupil in the school, and was a physical wreck at the age of eight years. The shadowy outline given of her character reminds us strongly of Charlotte, while Elizabeth, the next sister, would seem to have been more of the make-up of Anne, docile and affectionate, but not as intellectually strong as her older sisters.

The severity of the strain put upon her in this school killed her. Charlotte tells us of the long, cold walks the pupils were compelled to take in the snow and rain, hungry and insuffi-

ciently clad ; of the barren, uncomfortable church in which they sat shivering through a long sermon, only to resume their weary march at the end of it, and then to go supperless to bed, or eat food that was distasteful and wholly inadequate to supply their needs. Charlotte never grew an inch in stature after leaving this school. She was the smallest of women, and attributed all her physical woes to the treatment she had received there.

She remained at home from this time, taking the responsibility of caring for the three younger children, and dividing her time between her books and their comfort. Her absorbing occupation when free to engage in it was writing, and her purely imaginative composition at this time was precocious and singular, while the amount produced was immense. The old nurse, their only companion, sat beside the children as they were grouped about the kitchen table in the evening writing, or listened to their unlimited stock of fairy stories, which they told each other for entertainment when she was cross and would not allow them to have the coveted candle to write by. These were peaceful, happy times for this closely united band, and they lived singularly studious lives for children who were not at school or subjected to any of the external incentives that lead the young to aspire for success. Doubtless much of the originality and freshness of their thoughts may be ascribed, on the other hand, however, to their home studies.

This story has to do with but one of these children, and yet it cannot be separated from the others. Until death had taken them from her, Charlotte's life was absorbed in theirs, and she loved them with all the strong affection of her strong and great nature. Her life was largely influenced by that of her more masculine sister Emily, who, if she had lived, would have been

the greater, though perhaps not the more successful, author of the two. Branwell, the golden-haired son of the home, and Anne, the youngest of that family, were both full of promise, and the eldest sister looked upon herself as the least among them all. She was the plainest in personal appearance, yet so spiritual and refined in organization was she, that the expression of her face was a study to her home companions, and a marvel to those who could not know that a great soul was enshrined in her little body. Charlotte was now sixteen years of age, and she was so small that she called herself stunted, but she was well formed, and as a child, exquisitely refined. In her attire she was neat and dainty, though her clothing, as befitted her father's idea of a minister's daughter, was plain and homely.

Her head was beautifully shaped and very large, while her great brown eyes beamed with animation. Her complexion was as variable as her emotions. With a nature so sensitive it was affected by every passing feeling, but at no time was it ruddy or blooming. Even in her best physical states it gave evidence of inadequate vitality. "The usual expression of her eyes," said one who knew her well, "was of listening intelligence, but now and then when exercised by some strong emotion a light would shine out as if some spiritual lamp had been lighted behind those glowing, expressive orbs." Her features were plain, but her countenance was remarkable for its power and expression. Her hands were small and strong, and indicative of the extreme sensibility of her organism. Her fingers had a fineness of sensation that gave them constant unrest. They were never still, and when nervous she would clinch them together with a force that often left a bruise for days. Having a finely shaped head, she had a broad and handsome brow, and in her day it was not considered fashionable to hide it. Char-

lotte Bronté as a girl of nineteen had much book knowledge of a desultory kind, but her definite acquirements were few. She was not very reliable in orthodox matters ; of religion in its sunny aspect and beautifying influence she knew little, and it was not surprising that she early exhibited antagonistic feelings toward the Calvinistic views of her father, and hated with girlish vim the long-faced curates and travelling preachers who occasionally appeared at the parsonage table.

She was not devoted to mathematics, nor was she well advanced in the sciences. She studied nature as an enthusiast, but not at this period as a student. She tried to be a botanist, but found that she loved flowers too well to dissect them.

Though something of a musician, she did not rely upon her abilities in that direction very far. Her opportunities were not great, and her endeavors in this direction received very little encouragement from her austere parent. He tolerated it as a necessary adjunct to a girl's education and accomplishments. But Charlotte loved music, and its influence over her was powerful. It was a passion with her, and her soul, responsive to melody, caught the refrain of every accent of softness or sweetness, and its influence reached the world in the heart-music she sang, which vibrates and reverberates wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is known !

When the question of earning her bread came to be considered by her, and it came early, Charlotte realized that teaching young children was her only available accomplishment, and she sought and obtained a position as governess. She was but nineteen years old at the time, but a woman in fixedness of purpose and appreciation of her worldly condition. Very bravely she entered upon and endured the uncongenial task, and resolutely attempted a second siege of it, after having been well-nigh

prostrated by the first. But it was work which was simply repugnant to every feeling and emotion of her life, and she gave it up in despair. Not to live in idleness, however, or to throw upon others the burden of her support. To screen and protect her sisters, she went forth to earn money, and she ceased her efforts only when illness brought on by wretchedness compelled her to return home.

There is something fascinating in the pictures given of Haworth parsonage at this time and previous to it. Haworth is now connected with the outer world by manufacturing interests and by a railroad which has a station there, and the villagers have mixed of late years more with society beyond Yorkshire, yet it is a sombre place, and its people retain now the dialect which Charlotte depicted so successfully in "*Shirley*." The straggling village has but one street, and the old gray stone parsonage stands quite at the top of the hill, facing down it, and surrounded on all sides but one by the village graveyard. The view from the side where there are no graves is the bleakest one of all. It looks out upon moors which are as barren as a prairie in winter, and colorless as a desert save when the heather is in bloom.

To an American accustomed to great variety of scenery the desolate monotony of those North of England moors is well-nigh insupportable. There is nothing for the eye to feed upon in those great tracts of dun-colored wastes, and in their unvarying silence and sameness they are most depressing to one unaccustomed to them.

Something of the feeling that Washington Irving had when visiting the Border Country affects the American when viewing Haworth. He, fresh from the superb and matchless views of the Hudson River, tried hard to admire the Doon, but he

could see nothing on its “ banks and braes” to call forth enthusiasm. Even with Walter Scott as a guide, he whose enchantment lingers over all the land he loved so well, Irving could find nothing grand in the way of scenery, and turned from the Eildon Hills with a disappointment all the more keen because of his wish to be charmed. He could not forget the Catskills, and the knowledge he had of finer scenes at home left it not possible for him to be aught than he was—silent. But what the Alps are to the Swiss, the sea to the Hollanders, are the moors to the North Country people. Association clothes them with beauty perennial. Their changeless monotony grated not at all harshly on the girls of a home that was even more cheerless, and they spent some of their happiest hours upon them. A walk in the dull and waning light of a winter’s afternoon enabled those motherless children to return to their writing or their planning at evening time with new zeal, and while the wind sang its requiem without, or the storm pelted the doors and windows of the kitchen in which they sat, they thought and wrote the compositions that were weird and extraordinary, and in the case of each were characteristic of their later work. If the storm was severe they cowered together, not in fear but from acute nervous pain. Their sensitive bodies were powerfully affected by the lightning flash or the roll of thunder, and they tremblingly talked, if they talked at all, at such a time. Their misery was born of their weak nerves and too vivid imaginations. For they were all rich in imagination, that priceless gift which enables one to drink the wine of human existence without the lees, and inhale the perpetual breath of summer even after the snows of winter have clogged the dull course of life.

To know Charlotte Bronté, one must know her father. She

was the most like him in mental qualities of any of the children, and yet Charlotte was not the most gifted of them. Emily Bronté, the Ellis Bell of English fiction, if she had reached her meridian of growth would have been phenomenal—at least she was so in promise. Her father seems never to have understood her, but it must be said in his extenuation that she was a hard nature to comprehend, and only Charlotte of all the household knew her great intellectual breadth and power.

The original family name was Prunty, and it was exchanged to Bronté to gratify an uncle who paid Mr. Bronté's way through Cambridge and started him in life. His selfishness was cultivated as an amiable eccentricity at first, and it became second nature by constant indulgence and lack of opposition. His gentle daughters, as their mother before them, never thought of opposing him, and he himself did not know how selfish he was, nor realize until they were all dead how cheerless had been the childhood he had given them. Charlotte, who knew him so well, and his kind so slightly, imagined through her early life that all men were as deeply imbued with this attribute as he. She could never wholly divest herself of the idea that selfishness was peculiarly a masculine quality. Few Americans can understand or thoroughly realize the lonely English parsonage of which there are happily not many so lonely as that of Haworth. There is no such free and cordial relationship between the pastor and his rustic flock as writers in this country picture and as really exists.

The causes of this are not far to seek. The English clergyman, however poor his benefice may be, has the twofold reason for indifference and self-isolation, that being the officer of a department of the State, his people did not give him a call and cannot give him a dismissal. He is there for life, as

long as he does not break the law, unless he be promoted to a better living. Mr. Bronté seems to have had no ambition. Such men are not so rare as one might think. Once settled in their narrow sphere, however uncomfortable they may feel at first, they learn to endure and then to love it. Like the old debtor in the Marshalsea whom no persuasion could induce to accept liberation, it is doubtful if Mr. Bronté would have accepted higher preferment in the Church if it had been offered him. Everything in his character and life indicates that he was one of the immovables so far as his own and his children's interests were concerned. At St. John's College, Cambridge, after taking his Bachelor's degree, he never proceeded farther, although the poorest curate in England is always anxious to take his Master of Arts degree. He had mind, but no ambition to direct and utilize it. He wasted his life as he did the gunpowder that fired his pistol. His career was useless practice with an empty gun. To use Archbishop Whately's words of English preaching, "He aimed at nothing and he hit it." The effect of this may be traced in the neglected genius of his daughters, and still more painfully in the chaotic and purposeless career of his son.

Branwell Bronté, this only son of the house, was a lad of great promise. He was the handsomest of all the family, and was his father's idol. He was the liveliest and wittiest of them all, but his training had not been of the kind to make him strong to meet the world. He started out in life a brilliant young fellow, but he quickly fell into the snares about him, and came home from his first venture as a teacher in a private family, contaminated and already entered upon his downward course. Mr. Henry J. Raymond, who visited Haworth after Charlotte's death, found that Branwell's mem-

ory was most lovingly cherished in the village by the people who had known him as a boy, and who delighted in his cleverness and admired his beauty. He had mingled most with them, and they recalled his memory with more pride than any of the others of the family. He took to drink, and the sisters were glad to have the society of an aunt who at this time came to live with them. This aunt, their mother's sister, never left the parsonage again, and to her steadfast kindness they owed much gratitude. She was a matter-of-fact person, of elderly years, and not, in its best sense, a companion to her gifted nieces.

The sisters were not allowed to associate with their little neighbors, and their acquaintance was a limited one even in that small hill-side hamlet. The one friend upon whom they placed reliance and loved without limit of affection was Tabby, the faithful servant who had nursed their mother through illness and been with her at her death. She pitied the little flock left to her tender mercies, and if she failed to understand them, she jealously watched over and protected them. The sisters helped her in all domestic duties, and patiently and obediently heeded their father's commands. But at the night-time, after their elders had retired, they would then possess themselves of the kitchen, bring out their paper and pens and write ; or, if the spirit for composition was absent. they would slowly pace the room together, talking over their cares and trials, and plan and consult about their future. All had ambitions to become something above their present condition, and to make of life something more than existence. This time was the most congenial of all they spent, not even excepting their afternoon walks on the moors, often prolonged until dark, their only protector being Emily's great dog, and as the years passed it became sacred to one of them—the last surviving sister. It was then-

that they discussed the plots of their novels, read each other the chapters when written, and comforted one another with what little hope they could command. When both Emily and Anne were dead, Charlotte continued the habit of walking alone, sadly resuming her work or weeping in her misery.

Charlotte, and indeed the others, had written much that was tolerably successful even in their own opinion, and for advice and counsel Charlotte wrote to Southey. He replied graciously, and was evidently interested in the young girl, for he invited her to visit him at the “Lakes.” But there was no money in that home to devote to visiting, and Charlotte and Emily had both concluded by this time that their writings would not bring it to them.

Charlotte proposed to Emily the idea of enlarging the parsonage and opening a school there, and Emily, who had tried to be a governess with even less success than Charlotte, gladly assented to this plan that would enable them to live at home and together. The obstacle they had to contend against was their lack of accomplishments, and they resolved to conquer this drawback. To do it successfully, they went to Brussels to study for six months. Charlotte was twenty-six years old then —a time of life when most women feel that their youth is behind them, and when the generality of people consider that their days of study are over.

At the expiration of the six months the two sisters were offered positions in the school in which they were, and there they would have remained but for the shadow that fell upon the home circle in the death of their aunt, the faithful relative who had furnished the girls with means to study abroad. They returned to Haworth to find the idolized brother a being upon whom they could only look with grief and shame. The sight

of this brother's dissipation distressed these sisters grievously, and the youngest sister, Anne, who had borne the brunt of it so far, asked a respite from the pain, and she went out for a time to fill a governess' place, leaving Emily at home, while Charlotte turned her face again toward Brussels.

This step in her life was a mistake, as the pages of "*Villette*" show. It has left her fame and honor as a woman as bright as sunshine, but it was here that Charlotte Bronté ceased to be a girl, and came, through a baptism of pain, to her true status as a woman. When she left Brussels to go home her heart was behind her, and in a moment of weakness and contrary to her best judgment she went back there. It was an unreasonable impulse, and for her selfish folly she suffered, as she herself has said, a withdrawal, for more than two years, of happiness and peace of mind. Her heart had been captured by an acquaintance in Brussels, and Paul Emanuel, the hero of "*Villette*," was the portraiture of the man she loved. Indeed, in all her writings Charlotte Bronté was more of a domestic historian than a creator of incidents. Her works are mainly delineations of actual experiences ; she was not an inventor of fiction. Her fancy filled in the background of her pictures, but her own knowledge of people and things supplied the material. The incidents narrated in this novel were a literal transcription of actual facts. From its pages may be gleaned some of the pain she suffered while a teacher in Brussels, but not all. She was the one English girl in a house full of French-speaking people. She was poor, and could not, if she desired, find pleasure or companionship outside of the school. The man she loved was an inmate of that school, and taught her French in return for lessons in English. She hated herself for the weakness of staying there, yet could not bear to go.

The mental pain she suffered after her return had well nigh driven her insane. She was spending the long vacation alone in the deserted school, with only a servant to keep her company, and the strain upon her nervous system made her very ill. One day, a close, sultry day in June, she rose from her bed of fever, and arraying herself went forth in the wet streets for a walk. She was in despair—her bright imagination, her strong will, both had failed her—and her grief was all the more keen because it was of her own making. As she rushed along, not caring whither she went, the bells of a church arrested her footsteps. She wandered in and knelt down with others on the stone pavement. It was an old, solemn church, its pervading gloom not gilded but purpled by light shed through stained glass. When the others had gone to the confessional and returned consoled, she mechanically rose and went forward. The English girl had never before been in the confessional, and was ignorant of its formulæ. She saw before her an elderly man, whose benign face was quickly turned toward her when she said, half in apology and half in fright, “My father, I am Protestant.” But she received such kindly counsel, after she had explained her lonely position and her great mental and physical sufferings, that she never forgot it. He was kind to her when she needed kindness, and though she never returned as he invited her to, she pays him tribute in her book.

None of her family ever knew from her what she had suffered in her unfortunate attachment for the relative of her employer—a cruel, despotic woman who is described accurately in “*Villette*”—but they realized a depth and strength of character not before observable. She was a sad woman now, chastened by a sorrow she never told, but was ready to put the past behind her—a past in which there was no memory of wrong-

doing, no ghost, save that of pain, to haunt the future. People are so willing to believe that strong natures arrive at perfection without having known pain, and are acquainted with human nature through their intuitions only and not their experiences, that it shocks them sometimes to learn their mistake. Charlotte Bronté learned herself, not by the development of her intellect, but through a great tempest of love that swept over her life—a tempest which she was enabled by her native purity, strong character, and excellent discipline to master. She bridged this bitter experience by active work performed with merciless disregard for her bodily and mental condition, and won her peace at last.

Had she not known the experience, we should not have had such books as she wrote, for no woman without actual self-knowledge could ever have pictured such a character as Rochester, or been able to write such a book as "*Jane Eyre.*" The public believed the daughter of the village minister to be a genius whose imagination and ability supplied the materials for her work. But as we have seen, her knowledge of the world and of herself was not as limited as was generally believed. Before she wrote her famous books she had realized her own nature and governed it ; had wrestled with the great emotion of love ; tested her strength in its fiery school, and had found it sufficient for her needs. Henceforth, she was ready to guide the weak and teach many lessons to her kind.

When Charlotte reached home from Brussels, she showed Emily and Anne some of the poetry she had been writing of late, and was greatly surprised to learn that they too had tried their talents in that direction. They consulted together and determined to publish their compositions. Charlotte wrote to a London publisher, and an agreement was made by which the

book was issued at their expense. It was called "Poems of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell," and, it is needless to add, it had no success. Emily's poems are the best, some of them possessing a lyrical beauty and a depth of meaning more clearly defined later in "*Wuthering Heights*," her only novel. Charlotte's poems show that she had not the true poet's faculty of harmonizing thought and metre. She wrote with earnestness and feeling, but with evident constraint, her wild, imaginative faculty responding awkwardly to the limitations of verse.

The year 1846 was one of peculiar domestic hardships and unusual mental activity to Charlotte Bronté. She had a troubled heart to cure, and an increased necessity for work that would pay her. Her brother had by this time become a helpless burden, making life a continued torture to those at home, and, to crown all her trials, the father was threatened with blindness. With this crushing misfortune upon them the younger sisters well nigh gave up, but Charlotte, reasonable woman that she was, met the calamity with resolute energy and proposed a visit to a noted oculist.

It was in this year of 1846 that she accompanied the almost sightless father to Manchester to have an operation performed upon his eyes, and while in a strange city and under such discordant circumstances she made another attempt at book-making. Previous to this time she had written "*The Professor*," a story which no publisher would accept, and which had been returned to her, while both her sisters' efforts at story-writing had been rewarded with success. With the soiled manuscript of this first attempt now before her, with the thought of the dissipated brother whose dark shadow rested over it, in the presence of her fault-finding father, and dwelling constantly upon her absent sisters whom she loved so truly, she began

“Jane Eyre.” It was at such a time that her great talent, which she could never wholly ignore and which she had suppressed at duty’s demand repeatedly, burst forth, asserted its sway and made her more contented and happy, for her imaginative faculty was, under all circumstances, a source of comfort.

Now, as in all times of trial, she must work or die, and her friendly pen was her solace, her salvation, her one consolation through all the vicissitudes of life. Very little more than this is known of the conception and composition of her greatest work ; but it is enough to stamp her heroic spirit with immortality, and send her familiar name echoing down the silent corridors of time.

It was the necessity for mind occupation that impelled her to write, not a desire for fame. She had already lain down the bloom of her life and the best opportunities for self-improvement under the Juggernaut of duty, thereby crushing and impoverishing her own nature that she might fulfil her part as a daughter and sister. Like all people who do great work, she had no thirst for greatness. She wrought out her ideas in order to satisfy the imprisoned angel that lived within her, and to use that magnificent phosphoric element in her brain which consumed her vital forces. She published her book under her masculine *nom de plume*, “Currer Bell,” and told no one but her sisters of its existence. When it was published, and before it had raised the storm of applause that followed its public reception, she took a copy of it in one hand and an adverse review of it in the other to her father, and quietly told him of her task and the result. Then, for the first time, he realized what the postman’s call meant when some time before he had stopped at the door with a letter for Currer Bell, and was met

with the reply from himself that there was no such person in the village.

Then came the abuse which the critics who could not appreciate her book heaped upon it. She was assailed as the exponent of views not compatible with womanly purity, and her great soul was inexpressibly pained. She realized that she was not quite understood, and so she kept steadily and silently on her course with the same unconscious energy that draws the tide up and down the yellow sands, or causes the subtle magnetic currents to keep the needle forever journeying and striving toward the poles.

To her family she remained faithful as a slave ; to herself, merciless and pitiless. In her obscure home she stayed uninterruptedly and held herself constant to the maxims of her life—which were expressed in her industry and great conscientiousness.

After her name had become a household word, even here in America, she withheld every temptation which extraordinary literary success throws in the way of women, and only exhibited herself to her London publishers on one occasion, some time after the book had been published, to correct the widely circulated charge that she had satirized Thackeray under the character of Rochester, and had even obtruded on the sorrows of his private life.

Nothing that came of the fame that “*Jane Eyre*” achieved caused the commotion in that village parsonage that this scandal did. She and Anne started for London the evening of the same day they heard it, and next morning, after partaking of breakfast at the depot, they went to the publisher’s office. Charlotte had some difficulty in seeing the gentleman she had corresponded with, and when he reluctantly left his private

office to speak with her, he opened the conversation with an impatient “ Well, young woman, what do you want of me ? ”

One can imagine the quiet confidence with which she replied that she wished to see him privately ; that she wrote “ Jane Eyre.” He was greatly amazed, and quickly led the way to his office, where he plied her with questions, complimented her book, and persuaded the sisters to become his mother’s guests. This they did, and Charlotte afterward spoke of the strong contrasts of that day in London. In the morning utter strangers, that night guests of people delighted to show them attentions, and in the midst of a distinguished audience listening to Jenny Lind sing.

Immediately the report that had done her such injustice was corrected, and when she next visited London she was introduced to Thackeray, and was invited by him to attend one of his readings. He, proud of her presence, singled her out for special attention, and it soon became known to the audience that the author of “ Jane Eyre ” was in the hall. She blushed and fidgeted under the notice she received, and went back to her publisher’s house writhing under the pangs. She was not at all fitted for notoriety, and never did realize that she was a brilliant and successful author. She wrote for pure love of writing, and planned her work on the best model she knew. Few women, comparatively speaking, were engaged in the pursuit then, and book-making for money was not common. Charlotte Bronté was fortunate in some respects, in one particularly—she died before trashy novels became the fashion.

The quiet home-life at the parsonage was continued after the publication of “ Jane Eyre,” and Charlotte and her sisters had their hands full in watching over their ruined brother, and

cheering as best they could their disappointed and unhappy father.

There never was a character more susceptible to and more influenced by personal environment than that of Charlotte Bronté. If her lot had fallen in a fair ground and pleasant places, with genial company of other children, and the guiding influence of those great minds that learned too late to love her, she would have shown, to her own and the world's advantage, less of the wild flower grown in the wilderness than she did. She could not then have deemed Rochester's imperiousness heroic or even manly ; she would have seen humanity in its truest phases less in the lightning and the storm, and more in the still small voice that sings in every true heart. The wonder is that the heart of Jane Eyre is so unscarred by hardship and neglect, by misunderstanding and the fatality of suffering from no self-inflicted wound as it is. As she teaches her pupil, her own childhood seems to be renewed by the gracious and invisible touch of a divine Healer's hand. A smile of happier thought breaks over the patient brow ; the iron that has entered into her soul no longer pains her ; years of heart-ache and distress vanish like the early mist ; she becomes as the lily no longer persecuted by the thorns, and feels once more

“A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.”

Such is the resuscitative vital power of noble natures only.

But was Rochester worthy of a nature like this ? Who does not grudge as well as envy him his “little Jane” ? In our time—for the world's ideal of men and women has moved apace since then—a man who could browbeat a defenceless woman, and still more his own dependent, as he did, would be called a brute instead of a hero. His own sufferings were no

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excuse, for she had not caused them. Indeed, there is a touch of mock disease and egotism in his craving for Jane's sympathy and playing upon it with his rough, coarse hands, because he knew the tender music that was stored beneath that quiet manner.

The relation of the sexes to each other before marriage (which has, in the language of orthodoxy, made of the man and the woman "no more twain but one flesh") is the most complex of social problems. We think that Charlotte Bronté managed Jane Eyre and Rochester far better than George Eliot manages Dorothea and Ladislaw. But when people talk about moral as apart from legal dissolution of marriage, of a wife or husband being morally though not technically free from the marriage bond, they talk nonsense, because domestic union with another is not a necessity, and it is a selfish love and ignoble passion and not a true affection which would ask a woman to forfeit her social status in the world.

"Jane Eyre" was nearly all transcribed on paper in that kitchen, and at night. It was a surprise to her that what had been written under such quiet influences should have created so much comment. Dickens, then in the zenith of his great popularity, Thackeray, and Miss Martineau were among the many writers who quickly recognized the genius of the unknown author, and George Eliot, then a maiden of four and twenty, and already entertaining radical views on many subjects, expressed admiration for the book, but took issue with the writer respecting Rochester's right to contract a fresh marriage situated as he was. She considered that he was justified in so doing, while the *Quarterly Review* denounced the morals of the work, and decided that its author was an improper woman who "for some sufficient reason had forfeited the society of her sex."

It is not a little remarkable that this first work was the most popular of all she produced, and singular also that in it she does not touch upon the experiences of her own life, which are the characteristic features of "*The Professor*" and "*Villette*," and are touched upon in "*Shirley*."

This second one of her novels was commenced and brought out in the midst of fearful domestic anguish. Branwell's career was drawing to a close, and the circumstances of his death greatly distressed his sensitive and long-suffering sisters. His final taking off was without much warning, but when he realized that the end was approaching he resolved to die as no one else had, and, rising to his feet and steadyng himself against the wall, he expired standing. In this act he exhibited the eccentricity of the family, and a strength of will sadly wanting in his life.

The despair of the father was drowned in drink, and for months he was a care and anxiety to those about him. The girls faced this sorrow as they had all others, and Charlotte, the strongest of all, by reason of her past experience, rose to the demands of each new situation with an outward calm born of the fierce lessons she had learned. Neither Charlotte nor Emily suffered over Branwell's fate as did Anne. She could not rally from the effect his sinful course had made upon her. The eldest sister was deeply grieved over the blighted life of the only son and brother of the family, but she could not view his evil ways without condemnation, and she had no patience with the weakness he exhibited.

In "*The Professor*," written some time before Branwell's death, she depicts his character in these words, used in describing one of its personages :

" Limited as has yet been my experience of life, I had once

had the opportunity of contemplating near at hand an example of the results produced by a course of domestic treachery. No golden halo of fiction was about this example. I saw it bare and real, and it was very loathsome. I saw a mind degraded by the practice of mean subterfuge, by the habit of perfidious deception, and a body depraved by the infectious influence of the vice-polluted soul. I had suffered much from the forced and prolonged view of this spectacle ; those sufferings I do not now regret, for their simple recollection acted as a most wholesome antidote to temptation. They had inscribed on my reason the conviction that unlawful pleasure, trenching on another's rights, is delusive and envenomed pleasure—its hollowness disappoints at the time, its poison cruelly tortures afterward, its effects deprave forever.”

Writing to one of her friends after his death, she says :

“ Many, under the circumstances, would think our loss rather a relief than otherwise ; in truth, we must acknowledge, in all humility and gratitude, that God has greatly tempered judgment with mercy ; but yet, as you doubtless know from experience, the last earthly separation cannot take place between near relatives without the keenest pangs on the part of the survivors. Every wrong and sin is forgotten then ; pity and grief share the heart and memory between them. Yet we are not without comfort in our affliction. A most propitious change marked the few last days of poor Branwell’s life ; his demeanor, his language, his sentiments, were all singularly altered and softened, and this change could not be owing to the fear of death, for within half an hour of his decease he seemed unconscious of danger.”

Those who had sat in judgment upon her recent work and deemed it immoral in tone should have seen her at this time.

Her sister, the strong-hearted and greatly endowed Emily, went into a rapid decline, and died in less than two months after her brother's death. The youngest sister, prostrated by this blow and already sickening from over-anxiety and grief, became an invalid, and Charlotte buried her six months later. Three deaths in the household in less than a year ! all Charlotte's loves gone ; only her father, who was no stay or comfort to her, left.

Anne, the youngest sister, had died away from home. Charlotte and a friend had accompanied her to the seaside, and while there she sank rapidly, as the others had, of consumption. It was against Charlotte's better judgment to take her from home, for she realized that the gentle life was well nigh spent when they started, but Anne was hopeful, and the father was eager for anything that promised benefit to his child. When the end came, Charlotte could do no more than turn her face, alone, toward Haworth. Her father met her at the gate on her return and tried hard to be cheerful, as he welcomed his only child back to share his loneliness ; but the desolation was all-pervading, and the anguish of the two as they passed together into the old house was uncontrollable.

When Charlotte Bronté was thirty-five years old she began to write her last work, "*Villette*." It was her best beloved brain-child, far dearer to her than her powerful "*Shirley*," or her more popular "*Jane Eyre*." Every sentence of "*Villette*" was written, literally, through her tears. The task was a cruel if a passionately absorbing one. She was picturing the darkest chapter of her own life, and suffering the loneliness of death in a house where the visits of the great destroyer had been so persistent. Only her active interest in the welfare of those about her, the lonely father and aged servant, kept her

mind healthful or her heart at peace. In a letter to a friend she says :

" It is useless to tell you how I live. I endure life, but whether I enjoy it or not is another question. However, I get on. The weather, I think, has not been very good lately, or else the beneficial effects of change of air and scene are evaporating. In spite of regular exercise, the old headaches and starting, wakeful nights are coming upon me again. But I do get on, and have neither wish nor right to complain."

In "Villette" she gave vent to feelings that time had softened and which the sorrows she had passed through made insignificant compared to what they had been. "Madame Beck," however, she seems never to have forgiven, for she outlines her portrait in "The Professor," and touches upon it in "Shirley," where she quite irrelevantly introduces the following reference to her :

" I remember once seeing a pair of blue eyes, that were usually thought sleepy, secretly on the alert, and I knew by their expression—an expression which chilled my blood, it was in that quarter so wondrously unexpected—that for years they had been accustomed to silent soul-reading. The world called the owner of those blue eyes '*bonne petite femme*' (she was not an English-woman). I learned her nature afterward—got it off by heart—studied it in its farthest, most hidden recesses—she was the finest, deepest, subtlest schemer in Europe."

"Lucy Snowe" was not a match for this "subtlest schemer," and her soul loathed the unprincipled methods of the Belgian who had it in her power to hurt her so deeply. The passion of love was never more finely depicted than in her novels, and the best of her men are lovers. "Villette" was written after the master passion of her life had begun to die and she

was able to examine its corpse with the dissecting-knife of the physician. Therefore she makes Lucy Snowe cool, reserved, courageous, and strong. What Jane Eyre had been Lucy Snowe had then become, and her finest writing is to be found in this her ablest work. Her descriptions of nature are stirring and thrilling. Mr. Swinburne, however, quotes one phrase from "*Shirley*," which he pronounces exalted and perfect poetry, and her finest effort in this direction. It is this : "The moon reigns glorious, glad of the gale ; as glad as if she gave herself to its fierce caress with love." This, he adds, "is painting wind like David Cox, and light like Turner. To find anything like it in verse we must go to the highest springs of all ; to Pindar or to Shelley or to Hugo."

Throughout all its pages she does as good descriptive writing as this, which seems to have delighted the soul of this poet ; and in character painting she has established her claim to genius in the wonderful man—Paul Emanuel. What writer of less power could have made this eccentric little professor, with his faults and infirmities, his sudden gusts of temper and childish weaknesses, so altogether lovable ?

But the world preferred Rochester to Paul, just as it largely prefers Jane Eyre to Lucy Snowe. The coarse, imperious ways of Rochester pleased the English reading public of her day, and led even Miss Martineau to say of the creator of the character, "that in her vocation she had, in addition to the deep intuitions of a gifted woman, the strength of a man, the patience of a hero, and the conscientiousness of a saint."

As a piece of literary work "*Jane Eyre*" lacked, as the critics have told us, in artistic merit, and yet it was and is a passionately absorbing novel. In the power to make her readers feel as she herself must have felt in writing it, she is to-day

one of the few great writers of fiction. So great was the fervor and force of her spiritual insight that she swayed her readers as the fierce wind does the tall pines and the low shrubs alike, and she reached to the core of the human heart because she wrote from the innermost convictions of her earnest soul.

Poor little Charlotte Bronté, knowing neither the mother-love nor the child-love, and having been compelled to stifle the one absorbing affection of her life, gave to her heroine the unattractiveness she believed she must possess. Even the portrait of "*Emma*," the fragment left unfinished when she went to her room one day "to lie down awhile," and never left it again, is the same plain, austere, and pathetic picture of childhood. Had she lived to have finished it under the newly awakened mother feelings in her own heart, we would have had a brighter fulfilment of life's promises, perhaps, and known her heroine in the central position she never reached with them. The womanhood of all her heroines, *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Lucy Snowe*, we admire, but we can hardly contemplate them as mothers. She had not painted in all her character painting a proud and fond mother, happy in her home and in her children.

As has been said, Charlotte's novels were mainly delineations of actual experiences. The rich imaginative endowment she possessed enabled her to clothe the commonest incidents of life with interest and beauty. Her life would have been intolerable in its monotony to a woman of less imaginative brilliancy. To her readers who do not realize this fact it is a mystery how she dwelt amid scenes so at variance outwardly with all she has written. That quality of her mind enabled her to live two lives, be two individuals. Those who have been in the old stone-floored parsonage kitchen where she did the greater part

of her literary work, and have been oppressed with the desolateness of the view that lies without, have not stopped to think with what eyes she looked upon it, or how much the silence and peace that characterized it helped her in her absorbing tasks.

Emily Bronté had exercised an influence over the heart of her sister that no other of her family seemed to possess. Charlotte had rightly appreciated her individuality and great talents. She knew how heroic Emily was, and she pictured her faithfully in "*Shirley*." She had seen Emily do such things as only large and strong natures are capable of performing. Had known her to take a hot iron and burn her arm where a dog had buried his teeth when mad, and withhold the fact from the household until the danger was well nigh over. Emily was less disciplined than Charlotte, and was less inclined to conform her way of life to that of others. She lived a separate existence apart from all her kind, and wrote a book which to-day is one of the curiosities of English fiction. It stands alone, not so much for its lifelike portraiture of men and women, as for the revelations it gives of the great genius of a young girl who had known nothing of the world. It seemed a cruel fate that took her out of life before she had tested her own powers or given to literature a fitting successor to "*Wuthering Heights*."

Charlotte Bronté was a pioneer in the woman movement so far as it related to literature, and was a blue-stocking when a blue-stocking in England was looked upon very much as a woman suffragist was here years ago. The majority of her sex when they learned her identity charged her with having unsexed herself, and condemned as impure a morality that was a quality apart from expediency and subterfuge. It may have

been justice, as justice was conceived for woman in that day, but when we think of all the opposition and abuse heaped upon Charlotte Bronté's "Jane Eyre," the matchless love-story of the age, and know how little she realized out of all that was made by it, a spirit of indignation is stirred. And, think of it, that woman whose earnest efforts to earn money which was sorely needed in her home ; who had to recognize and tacitly apologize, in her assumption of a masculine title, to the narrowness of public opinion, was continually assailed for what she had elevated English fiction in performing.

And, further, this woman who toiled in poverty, who studied her books as she kneaded bread, and who achieved celebrity as a writer with the first story she published, could not demand a penny from America for all the happiness and entertainment she gave and is still giving us ; was not paid a stipend of all we owe her. The lack of an international copyright law deprived her of much of her dues while she lived, and her friends after she died. Now each time that a book of hers is sold in America, we are just as guilty of taking that which does not belong to us as was Rob Roy McGregor, who found it more convenient to supply himself with beef by *stealing it alive* from the adjacent glens than by buying it killed in the butcher's market.

To Charlotte Bronté women owe a debt of gratitude that cannot be paid in admiration of her achievements ; it must be expressed in steady endeavor to establish the principles she so admirably, because so womanly and gently, advocated in her books. She chose the field of fiction in which to work, and through it she taught her sister-women the way to convert mental poverty into riches, obstacles into opportunities, and their duty to demand for themselves the divine rights of

womanhood. She was one of the first writers of her day to realize what Matthew Arnold speaks of as the want of correspondence between the forms of modern England and its spirit. She saw this want of correspondence conspicuously displayed in the real and the pretended recognition of her sex in all fields. The popular idea that there is sex in mind she worked valiantly to correct, and she longed to hail that season when bright minds should be classed no longer as men and women, but be seen only in the neutral light of authorship.

Miss Martineau found something inexpressibly affecting in the aspect of the frail little creature, who had done such wonderful things, and who was able to bear up with so bright an eye and so composed a countenance, under not only such a weight of sorrow, but such a prospect of solitude. And we have a melancholy pleasure in contemplating her energy and her will-power, and love to meditate upon the singular life of this little Yorkshire girl whose vicissitudes only nerved her to greater effort. And yet it is always with a feeling of rebellion that we note the never-ending sacrifices wherein she gave up health and achievement, and realize what she could have been with greater culture and length of days ; might have been if taken out from her constant teachings and toilings and given a measure of the happiness she could have enjoyed.

One of the least known incidents in the life of Charlotte Bronté is that of her marriage. Among the few of her father's acquaintances whom she knew well was Mr. Nicholls, his curate, who had been living in Haworth for some years when he asked her to be his wife. For herself, Charlotte preferred her spinster state, but she realized that her father's active life was drawing to its close, and believed that this kindly gentleman would be a stay and a prop to him as he grew old and

infirm. With these feelings, and perhaps with no emotion stronger than friendly interest, she told her father of the honor that had been paid her and asked his advice. To her astonishment he grew violently angry ; denounced his assistant as presumptuous, and was so unreasonable that Charlotte made haste to assure him of her willingness to decline the offer. "The veins on his forehead stood out like whip-cords," Charlotte tells a friend in a letter, and "his eyes glared with rage." She really feared for his reason, and quickly and sorrowfully acquainted Mr. Nicholls with her father's decision.

There is something quaint and pathetic in the filial obedience of this great woman, who, at a time of life when most women have forgotten their child-reverence for parents, is yielding the privileges she has earned and the rights that belong to her age and position to her irritable, unreasonable parent. Mr. Nicholls departed from Haworth, and Charlotte and her father lived on alone in the silent old house. The death of Emily's faithful old dog is recorded by Charlotte as one of the few incidents that occurred of note during this lonely time. She wrote and kept house and watched over her father, and had fully made up her mind that things were not to be different while she lived, when one day, quite unexpectedly to her, Mr. Bronté proposed to recall Mr. Nicholls and asked his daughter to write him. He insisted, and seemed in such haste that he could not wait patiently until, in response to Charlotte's invitation, Mr. Nicholls returned. He had noted the failing health of his last child, and believing that she was grieving over his obduracy in this matter, relented. His daughter sent for the two friends she loved most ardently from her school days to her death, her friend "Ellen,"\* and Miss Wooller, her

\* Miss Ellen Nussey.

teacher, and very quietly one bright June morning in 1854 she became Charlotte Nicholls. The new husband carried his wife to visit his relatives in Ireland, and then they returned to the lonely father to cheer his life with their presence. She entered into her husband's interests and occupations as much as she could, but she was clearly unfitted for an active, matter-of-fact existence. He wanted her to be an assistant to him, and cared nothing for her celebrity as an author. He rather opposed allusion to it, seeming to feel that her authorship belonged to her single life and had no part in her present existence. She could not separate herself from her pen-work, and one night when the two sat alone, listening to the winds sighing over the moors, she thought it a fitting time to tell him that she was writing another story. "If you were not with me I should be writing now," she said, and then she went to her desk and brought from it the freshly written manuscript. He heard her read it, remarked upon its opening pages as recalling "*Jane Eyre*," and listened to her plans regarding it. It was laid away that night and never touched by her again. Her two old friends were asked to come and see her, and one of them hastened to her side. She saw, what husband and father were slow to believe, that she was dying. The new year came and found her far on her last journey. She died very quietly early one Saturday morning in March, 1855, in the eighth month after her marriage and the ninth year of her authorship.

The anxious villagers heard the solemn notes of the passing bell, and breathlessly counted the strokes as it rang out its dissonance on the chilly air. Thirty-nine times it struck. "'Tis she," they said, and their hearts ached for the two left alone in the empty old house. For six years after Charlotte's death Mr. Bronté lived, ministered to and tended by her husband,

and then he died. Mr. Nicholls, alone now, returned to Ireland, and the parsonage passed into the hands of others.

All that is left of the Brontés in Haworth are the graves in the now modernized church and their memory, kept green by the thousands who have flocked there to learn all the particulars of the life of the woman who had made her name a familiar one to the reading world. Some years after the death of Mr. Bronté Grace Greenwood visited Haworth, and gives this picture of the old church :

"The old church was only a few steps farther on. We went first to the little cottage of the sexton, opposite—oddly enough, the only cheerful-looking house in the village, and not finding that functionary at home, easily prevailed on his wife to open the church for us. Never shall I forget my feelings on entering ! First a chill from the sunless dampness of the building, then a sense of terrible oppression. I have been into many old churches, but never one which seemed so frightfully close and unwholesome. It was musty, and had about it a strange odor of mortal decay, as though exhalations were coming up through the very stones, from the charnel-house beneath. I only wondered that the delicate Bronté sisters lived so long as they did, having to sit through perhaps three long services every Sunday in that dreadful place. The family are all buried in the chancel, one above another—old Mr. Bronté, who died in 1861, last. This, is seems, was according to his wish—for the sexton's wife, who, by the way, was one of Charlotte Bronté's Sabbath-school scholars, told us that the strange old man had always expressed a desire to live to see them all buried. The stone which covers them is hidden by a wooden platform, and over that a carpet ; but on the wall above is a plain tablet, on which are inscribed the eight names—father,

mother, sisters, and brother. Here Charlotte Bronté was married. I wonder that she could have borne to kneel during the ceremony above her dead sisters. The old pew used by the family has been removed—why I don't know. The church also has been somewhat altered since Mr. Bronté's death, the organ-loft has been changed, the tower heightened, and a clock added, though the old sun-dial is still on the south side. In the vestry, where we wrote our names, and could find no record of other American pilgrims in the visitors' book, the sexton's wife showed us the register of the marriage of Arthur Bell Nicholls and Charlotte Bronté—her name written in a rather trembling hand."

The destruction of this old church, which took place in 1881, should have been prohibited by public sentiment. The villagers, both old and young, were in favor of its retention, and the feeling among the dissenters of every denomination in the place was opposed to its destruction. The Bronté sisters had glorified it with their fame, and made it a shrine to which strangers from all parts of the English-speaking world made pilgrimages. The edifice was therefore sacred to the associations connected with the name of Bronté, and it should have remained a monument to them as it was the burial-place of all save one of the family. It was an old and venerable pile, standing on the site of a chapel which had been erected in 1317, and containing within its walls a tablet to the memory of one of its many rectors, "W. Grimshawe, A.B., minister, 1742."

The church was erected in 1755, and at the time of its demolition had been altered but little, and was sufficiently quaint and picturesque to have been retained as a relic. A London paper, commenting upon its destruction, said :

"The Emperor Valens—we think it was Valens—imported into England a considerable number of Vandals, according to Gibbon, and the seed of them, as Lord Byron once remarked, has not yet perished out of the land."

But Charlotte Bronté's fame and her glory belong to no land or country, while her memory is cherished by the cultivated of every clime. The remembrance of her life is an inspiration to all who, like her, have pressed their bleeding feet upon the hard rocks of life and left their impress upon them.

She met the ills of life with a determined and vigorous composure, and a stern and trained self-reliance, and strove, like a spiritual athlete, for the place and position awarded those who overcome self-indulged indolence and sluggish dulness. She saw the prize of her high calling, and recognizing only its distance, trod down petty cares and fancied wrongs, and grasped at last the diadem.

The story is soon told. The poor have no lineage, and the simple annals of her well-spent life comprise the nobility that belongs to her name.

Nursed in solitude and under the dreary shadow of her father's cheerless presence, she achieved—through many trials and self-abnegations—success, and came at last by strange developments from humble obscurity to a noble fame. Those who once enjoyed the priceless privilege of looking into her pure, frank face could never doubt the faith that sustained her. Her religion was as broad as her conception of life was earnest and true. Her instincts taught her, and her genius led her to heights which revealed the grandeur of her own endowments.

In studying this strange life we cannot help wondering at the surprising courage exhibited in it, or of the gray shadows of solitude that rested over it. Only those

“ who have knowledge—  
How dreary 'tis for women to sit still  
On winter nights by solitary fires,  
And hear the nations praising them far off,”

could understand her life or appreciate the perpetual loneliness of her whose name had reached even the camp-fires on our Western wilds, and been echoed over the snow-clad mountain peaks of the distant Ural chain !

Certitude was her passion, and she stood in the middle of the nineteenth century, this century, which belongs to woman as truly as the fifteenth did to the Renaissance, the sixteenth the Reformation, or the eighteenth the Revolution—and was a unique figure in it.

Of all the women of England of the present century, the two who may be ranked as her worthiest successors as writers are Mrs. Browning and George Eliot. The life-histories of both these women are of equal interest with their authorship. No one thinks of Mrs. Browning without recalling her invalidism, her happy wifehood and motherhood. None now think of George Eliot without a feeling of pride in her as the largest endowed woman of this age, and one of the most exalted in her domestic life and affectional nature.

All three of these women exemplify in their perfected lives the power of personal character over literary attainments ; the unconquerable strength of genius when allied to great virtues and high convictions. They each and all drew out of sorrow first and then out of love the fulness and richness of their lives, and wrote from their hearts as well as their minds ; for in great souls like theirs there is perfect union of pursuit and private opinion.

Charlotte Bronté had more natural talent and far more spirit-

ual fervor and insight than either Mrs. Browning or George Eliot ; she had far less culture than either, and a more limited acquaintance with the world. But she was the completest woman of her era, the worthy predecessor in authorship of these two great women.

Neither of them has given to the world more than did Charlotte Bronté. She gave her sister women the inheritance of her life—womanly excellence, intellectual greatness, noble characteristics, and a stainless history.

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Nearly three decades of time have glided into the unreturning past since the mural which bears her name was placed in Haworth church. There now rests all that is earthly of that wondrous woman whose name touches a tender chord in the hearts of millions. All over the world her name is venerated. England claims her dust, but we in America think of her as our countrywoman, and find no phrase strong enough to express all we feel toward that gentle, child-like soul ; that face of strangely mixed sadness and mirth, touching in its weariness, sublime in its patient, trustful expression—whose eyes were ever looking yearningly into the future to find the promises of the past realized, whose lips were tightly though sweetly closed on all the revealings of her bruised heart. Long-suffering, yet truly brave and self-contained to the end, enduring in time to be glad in eternity.

Inasmuch as she used every atom of available power, her life was truly heroic, and when all the battles of intellect are recorded, inscribed high upon the scroll of fame will appear the imperishable name of CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ.



## THACKERAY'S TRIBUTE.

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*From Thackeray's introduction to the fragment of a story entitled "Emma," left by Charlotte Bronté, and published after her death :*

" I REMEMBER the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great honest eyes. An impetuous honesty seemed to me to characterize the woman.

" She gave me the impression of being a very pure and lofty and high-minded person. A great and holy reverence of right and truth seemed to be with her always. Such, in our brief interview, she appeared to me. As one thinks of that life so noble, so lovely—of that passion for truth—of those nights and nights of eager study, swarming fancies, invention, depression, elation, prayer ; as one reads the necessarily incomplete, though most touching and admirable history of the heart that throbbed in this one little frame—of this one among the myriads of souls that have lived and died on this great earth—this great earth ? this little speck in the infinite universe of God—with what wonder do we think of to-day, with what awe await to-morrow, when that which is now but darkly seen shall be clear ! As I read this little fragmentary sketch, I think of the rest. Is it ? and where is it ? Will not the leaf be turned some day, and the story be told ? Shall the deviser

of the tale somewhere perfect the history of little Emma's griefs and troubles ? Shall Titania come forth complete with her sportive court, with the flowers at her feet, the forest around her, and all the stars of summer glittering overhead ? How well I remember the delight, and wonder, and pleasure with which I read '*Jane Eyre*,' sent to me by an author whose name and sex were then alike unknown to me ; the strange fascinations of the book ; and how my own work pressing upon me, I could not, having taken the volumes up, lay them down until they were read through !"

## LETTERS AND EXTRACTS OF LETTERS.

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SELECTED WITH THE VIEW OF GIVING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ'S CHARACTER AS A WOMAN AND AS A FRIEND.

" HAWORTH, January 1, 1833.

" DEAR E.: I believe we agreed to correspond once a month. That space of time has now elapsed since I received your last interesting letter, and I now therefore hasten to reply. Accept my congratulations on the arrival of the New Year, every succeeding day of which will, I trust, find you wiser and better in the true sense of those much used words. The first day of January always presents to my mind a train of very solemn and important reflections, and a question more easily asked than answered frequently occurs, viz. : How have I improved the past year, and with what good intentions do I view the dawn of its successor ? These, my dearest E., are weighty considerations, which (young as we are) neither you nor I can too deeply or too seriously ponder. I am sorry your too great diffidence, arising, I think, from the want of sufficient confidence in your capabilities, prevented you from writing me in French, as I think the attempt would have materially contributed to your improvement in that language. You very kindly caution me against being tempted by the fondness of my sister

to consider myself of too much importance, and then in a parenthesis you beg me not to be offended. Oh, E., do you think I could be offended by any good advice you may give me? No, I thank you heartily, and love you, if possible, better for it. I had a letter about a fortnight ago from Miss ——, in which she tells me of the birth of Mrs. ——'s little boy, and likewise tells me you had not been at —— for upward of a month, but does not assign any reason for your absence. I hope it does not arise from ill health. [I am glad you like ‘Kenilworth.’ It is certainly a splendid production, more resembling a romance than a novel, and in my opinion one of the most interesting works that ever emanated from the great Sir Walter’s pen. I was exceedingly amused at the characteristic and *naïve* manner in which you expressed your detestation of Varney’s character, so much so, indeed, that I could not forbear laughing aloud when I perused that part of your letter; he is certainly the personification of consummate villainy, and in the delineation of his dark and profoundly artful mind Scott exhibits a wonderful knowledge of human nature as well as surprising skill in embodying his perceptions so as to enable others to become participators in that knowledge.] Excuse the want of *news* in this very barren epistle, for I really have none to communicate. Emily and Annie beg to be kindly remembered to you. Give my love to ——, and as it is very late, permit me to conclude with the assurance of my unchanged, unchanging, and unchangeable affection for you. Adieu, dearest E.  
I am ever yours, C. B.”

[From a letter written to her sister Emily in June, 1839, when she was teaching in a “wealthy Yorkshire family.”]

“I said in my last letter that Mrs. —— did not know me.

I now begin to find she does not intend to know me, and she cares nothing about me, except to contrive how the greatest possible quantity of labor may be got out of me ; and to that end she overwhelms me with oceans of needlework, yards of cambric to hem, muslin nightcaps to make, and, above all things, dolls to dress. I do not think she likes me at all, because I can't help being shy in such an entirely novel scene, surrounded as I have hitherto been by strange and constantly changing faces. . . . I used to think I should like to be in the stir of grand folks' society, but I have had enough of it ; it is dreary work to look on and listen. I see more clearly than I have ever done before, that a private governess has no existence—is not considered as a living, rational being, except as connected with the wearisome duties she has to fulfil." . . .

To her friend Ellen Nussey, March 3d, 1841. [Miss Bronté had taken another situation as governess, and it is from her new home that she writes.]

" In taking the place I have made a large sacrifice in the way of salary in the hope of securing comfort—by which word I do not mean to express good eating and drinking, or warm fire or a soft bed, but the society of cheerful faces, and minds and hearts not dug out of a lead mine, or cut from a marble quarry. My salary is not really more than £16 per annum, though it is nominally £20, but the expense of washing will be deducted therefrom. My pupils are two in number, a girl of eight and a boy of six. As to my employers, you will not expect me to say much about their characters when I tell you that I only arrived here yesterday. I have not the faculty of telling an individual's disposition at first sight. Before I can venture to pronounce on a character, I must see it first under

various lights, and from various points of view. All I can say therefore is, both Mr. and Mrs. —— seem to me good sort of people. I have as yet had no cause to complain of want of considerateness or civility. My pupils are wild and unbroken, but apparently well-disposed. I wish I may be able to say as much next time I write to you. My earnest wish and endeavor will be to please them. If I can but feel that I am giving satisfaction, and if at the same time I can keep my health, I shall, I hope, be moderately happy. But no one but myself can tell how hard a governess' work is to me ; for no one but myself is aware how utterly averse my whole mind and nature are for the employment. Do not think that I fail to blame myself for this, or that I leave any means unemployed to conquer this feeling. Some of my greatest difficulties lie in things that would appear to you comparatively trivial. I find it so hard to repel the rude familiarity of children. I find it so difficult to ask either servants or mistress for anything I want, however much I want it. It is less pain for me to endure the greatest inconvenience than to go into the kitchen to request its removal. I am a fool. Heaven knows I cannot help it.”

[At the end of her experiences in Brussels she writes from Haworth, January 23d, 1844.]

“ Every one asks me what I am going to do now that I am returned home ; and every one seems to expect that I should immediately commence a school. In truth it is what I should wish to do. I desire it above all things. I have sufficient money for the undertaking, and I hope now sufficient qualifications to give me a fair chance of success ; yet I cannot yet permit myself to enter upon life—to touch the object which

seems now within my reach, and which I have been so long straining to attain. You will ask me why? It is on papa's account; he is now, as you know, getting old, and it grieves me to tell you that he is losing his sight. I have felt for some months that I ought not to be away from him; and I feel now that it would be too selfish to leave him (at least as long as Branwell and Anne are absent), in order to pursue selfish interests of my own. With the help of God I will try to deny myself in this matter and to wait.

“I suffered much before I left Brussels. I think, however long I live, I shall not forget what the parting with M. Héger cost me. It grieved me so much to grieve him who has been so true, kind, and disinterested a friend. At parting he gave me a kind of diploma certifying my abilities as a teacher, sealed with the seal of the Athénée Royal, of which he is professor. I was surprised also at the degree of regret expressed by my Belgian pupils when they knew I was going to leave. I did not think it had been in their phlegmatic nature. . . . I do not know whether you feel as I do, but there are times now when it appears to me as if all my ideas and feelings, except a few friendships and affections, are changed from what they used to be; something in me which used to be enthusiasm is tamed down and broken. I have fewer illusions; what I wish for is active exertion—a stake in life. Haworth seems such a lonely, quiet spot, buried away from the world. I no longer regard myself as young—indeed, I shall soon be twenty-eight; and it seems as if I ought to be working and braving the rough realities of the world as other people do. It is, however, my duty to restrain this feeling at present, and I will endeavor to do so.”

“ March 24, 1845.

“ I can hardly tell you how time gets on at Haworth. There is no event whatever to mark its progress. One day resembles another, and all have heavy, lifeless physiognomies. Sunday, baking-day, and Saturday are the only ones that have any distinctive mark. Meantime, life wears away. I shall soon be thirty, and I have done nothing yet. Sometimes I get melancholy at the prospect before and behind me. Yet it is wrong and foolish to repine. Undoubtedly my duty directs me to stay at home for the present. There was a time when Haworth was a very pleasant place to me ; it is not so now. I feel as if we were all buried here. I long to travel ; to work ; to live a life of action. Excuse me, dear, for troubling you with my fruitless wishes. I will put by the rest and not trouble you with them. You *must* write to me. If you knew how welcome your letters are you would write very often. Your letters and the French newspapers are the only messengers that come to me from the outer world beyond our moors ; and very welcome messengers they are.”

“ August 18, 1845.

“ I have delayed writing because I have no good news to communicate. My hopes ebb low indeed about Branwell. I sometimes fear he will never be fit for much. The late blow to his prospects and feelings has quite made him reckless. It is only absolute want of means that acts as any check to him. One ought, indeed, to hope to the very last ; and I try to do so, but occasionally hope in his case seems so fallacious.”

“ December 31, 1845.

“ You say well in speaking of——, that no sufferings are so awful as those brought on by dissipation ; alas ! I see the

truth of this observation daily proved, and —— must have as weary and burden some a life of it in waiting upon their unhappy brother. It seems grievous, indeed, that those who have not sinned should suffer so largely.”

[*To Miss Wooler.*]

“ January 30, 1846.

. . . . “ You ask about Branwell ; he never thinks of seeking employment, and I begin to fear that he has rendered himself incapable of filling any respectable station in life ; besides, if money were at his disposal he would use it only to his own injury ; the faculty of self-government is, I fear, almost destroyed in him. You ask me if I do not think that men are strange beings. I do, indeed. I have often thought so ; and I think, too, that the mode of bringing them up is strange : they are not sufficiently guarded from temptation. Girls are protected as if they were something very frail or silly indeed, while boys are turned loose on the world as if they, of all beings in existence, were the wisest and least liable to be led astray. . . . I have already got to the point of considering that there is no more respectable character on this earth than an unmarried woman who makes her own way through life quietly, perseveringly, without support of husband or brother ; and who, having attained the age of forty-five or upward, retains in her possession a well-regulated mind, a disposition to enjoy simple pleasures, and fortitude to support inevitable pains, sympathy with the sufferings of others, and willingness to relieve want as far as her means extend.”

[*To . . . .*]

" June 17, 1846.

. . . . " Branwell declares that he neither can nor will do anything for himself ; good situations have been offered him, for which, by a fortnight's work, he might have qualified himself, but he will do nothing except drink and make us all wretched."

[Extract from Letter of July 10, 1846.]

. . . . " The right path is that which necessitates the greatest sacrifice of self-interest—which implies the greatest good to others ; and this path, steadily followed, will lead, I believe, in time, to prosperity and happiness ; though it may seem, at the outset, to tend quite in a contrary direction."

[*To Ellen Nussey.*]

" DEAR NELL : Your last letter both amused and edified me exceedingly. I could not but laugh at your account of the fall in B——, yet I should by no means have liked to have made a third party in that exhibition. I have endured one fall in your company, and undergone one of your ill-timed laughs, and don't wish to repeat my experience. Allow me to compliment you on the skill with which you can seem to give an explanation, without enlightening one whit on the question asked. I know no more about Miss R.'s superstition now than I did before. What is the superstition ?—about a dead body ? And what is the inference drawn ? Do you remember my telling you—or did I ever tell you—about that wretched and most criminal Mr. J. S. ? After running an infamous career of vice, both in England and France, abandoning his wife to

disease and total destitution in Manchester, with two children, and without a farthing, in a strange lodging-house ? Yesterday evening Martha came up-stairs to say that a woman—‘ rather lady-like,’ as she said—wished to speak to me in the kitchen. I went down. There stood Mrs. S., pale and worn, but still interesting-looking and cleanly and neatly dressed, as was her little girl, who was with her. I kissed her heartily. I could almost have cried to see her, for I had pitied her with my whole soul when I heard of her undeserved sufferings, agonies, and physical degradation. She took tea with us, stayed about two hours, and frankly entered into the narrative of her appalling distresses. Her constitution has triumphed over her illness ; and her excellent sense, her activity, and perseverance have enabled her to regain a decent position in society, and to procure a respectable maintenance for herself and her children. She keeps a lodging-house in a very eligible part of the suburbs of — (which I know), and is doing very well. She does not know where Mr. S. is, and of course can never more endure to see him. She is now staying a few days at E—— with the ——s, who, I believe, have been all along very kind to her, and the circumstance is greatly to their credit.

“ I wish to know whether about Whitsuntide would suit you for coming to Haworth. We often have fine weather just then. At least I remember last year it was very beautiful at that season. Winter seems to have returned with severity on us at present, consequently we are all in full enjoyment of a cold. Much blowing of noses is heard, and much making of gruel goes on in the house. How are you all ?

“ When do you think I shall see you ? ” she cries to her friend within a few days of her final return to Haworth. “ I have, of

course, much to tell you, and I dare say you have much also to tell me—things which we should neither of us wish to commit to paper. . . . I do not know whether you feel as I do, but there are times when it appears to me as if all my ideas and feelings, except a few friendships and affections, are changed from what they used to be. Something in me which used to be enthusiasm is tamed down and broken. I have fewer illusions. What I wish for now is active exertion—a stake in life. Haworth seems such a lonely, quiet spot, buried away from the world. I no longer regard myself as young ; indeed, I shall soon be twenty-eight, and it seems as if I ought to be working and braving the rough realities of the world, as other people do. It is, however; my duty to restrain this feeling at present, and I will endeavor to do so.”

“ December 21, 1848.

“ Emily suffers no more from pain or weakness now. She never will suffer more in this world. She is gone, after a hard, short conflict. She died on *Tuesday*, the very day I wrote to you. I thought it very possible she might be with us still for weeks ; and a few hours afterward she was in eternity. Yes ; there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday we put her poor, wasted mortal frame quietly under the church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should we be otherwise ? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over ; the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by ; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them. She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God’s will, and the place where she is gone is better than that she has left.”

“ March 24, 1849.

“ Anne’s decline is gradual and fluctuating ; but its nature is not doubtful. . . . In spirit she is resigned : at heart she is, I believe, a true Christian. . . . May God support her and all of us through the trial of lingering sickness, and aid her in the last hour, when the struggle which separates soul from body must be gone through ! We saw Emily torn from the midst of us when our hearts clung to her with intense attachment. . . . She was scarce buried when Anne’s health failed. . . . These things would be too much if reason, unsupported by religion, were condemned to bear them alone. I have cause to be most thankful for the strength that has hitherto been vouchsafed both to my father and myself. God, I think, is specially merciful to old age ; and for my own part, trials, which in perspective would have seemed to me quite intolerable, when they actually came, I endured without prostration. Yet I must confess that, in the time which has elapsed since Emily’s death, there have been moments of solitary, deep, inert affliction, far harder to bear than those which immediately followed our loss. The crisis of bereavement has an acute pang which goads to exertion ; the desolate after-feeling sometimes paralyzes. I have learned that we are not to find solace in our own strength ; we must seek it in God’s omnipotence. Fortitude is good ; but fortitude itself must be shaken under us to teach us how weak we are !”

[*To . . . .*]

“ September 20, 1849.

. . . . “ The two human beings who understood me, and whom I understood, are gone ; I have some that love me yet, and whom I love, without expecting, or having a right to .

expect, that they shall perfectly understand me, I am satisfied ; but I must have my own way in the matter of writing. The loss of what we possess nearest and dearest to us in this world produces an effect upon the character : we search out what we have yet left that can support, and, when found, we cling to it with a hold of new-strung tenacity. The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago ; its active exercise has kept my head above water since ; its results cheer me now, for I feel they have enabled me to give pleasure to others. I am thankful to God who gave me the faculty ; and it is for me a part of religion to defend this gift, and to profit by its possession."

[*To . . . .* ]

" (Spring of 1850.)

" I believe I should have written to you before, but I don't know what heaviness of spirit has beset me of late, made my faculties dull, made rest weariness, and occupation burdensome. Now and then the silence of the house, the solitude of the room has pressed on me with a weight I found it difficult to bear, and recollection has not failed to be as alert, poignant, obtrusive, as other feelings were languid. I attribute this state of things partly to the weather. Quicksilver invariably falls low in storms and high winds, and I have ere this been warned of approaching disturbance in the atmosphere by a sense of bodily weakness, and deep, heavy mental sadness, which some would call *presentiment*. Presentiment indeed it is, but not at all supernatural. The Haworth people have been making great fools of themselves about 'Shirley,' they take it in the enthusiastic light. When they got the volumes

at the Mechanics' Institution, all the members wanted them ; they cast lots for the whole three, and whoever got a volume was only allowed to keep it two days, and to be fined a shilling *per diem* for longer detention. It would be mere nonsense and vanity to tell you what they say. I have had no letters from London for a long time, and am very much ashamed of myself to find, now that that stimulus is withdrawn, how dependent upon it I had become. I cannot help feeling something of the excitement of expectation till post hour comes, and when day after day it brings nothing I get low. This is a stupid, disgraceful, unmeaning state of things. I feel bitterly enraged at my dependence and folly. It is so bad for the mind to be quite alone, to have none with whom to talk over little crosses and disappointments, and laugh them away. If I could write I dare say I should be better, but I cannot write a line. However (D. V.), I shall contend against the idiocy. I had rather a foolish letter from Miss —— the other day. Some things in it nettled me, especially an unnecessarily earnest assurance that, in spite of all I had gone and done in the writing line, I still retained a place in her esteem. My answer took strong and high ground at once. I said I had been troubled by no doubts on the subject, that I neither did myself nor her the injustice to suppose there was anything in what I had written to incur the just forfeiture of esteem. I was aware, I intimated, that some persons thought proper to take exceptions at 'Jane Eyre,' and that for their own sakes I was sorry, as I invariably found them individuals in whom the animal largely predominated over the intellectual, persons by nature coarse, by inclination sensual, whatever they might be by education and principle."

[To . . . .]

"July 18, 1850.

" You must cheer up, for your letter proves to me that you are low-spirited. As for me, what I said is to be taken in this sense : that, under the circumstances, it would be presumptuous in me to calculate on a long life—a truth obvious enough. For the rest, we are all in the hands of Him who apportions His gifts, health or sickness, length or brevity of days, as is best for the receiver : to him who has work to do, time will be given in which to do it ; for him to whom no task is assigned, the season of rest will come earlier. As to the suffering preceding our last sleep, the sickness, decay, the struggle of flesh and spirit, it *must* come sooner or later to all. If, in one point of view, it is sad to have few ties in the world, in another point of view it is soothing ; women who have husbands and children must look forward to death with more pain, more fear, than those who have none. To dismiss the subject, I wish (without cant, and not in any hackneyed sense) that both you and I could always say in this matter, The will of God be done. I am beginning to get settled at home, but the solitude seems heavy as yet. It is a great change, but in looking forward I try to hope for the best. So little faith have I in the power of any temporary excitement to do real good, that I put off day by day writing to London to tell them I have come home ; and till then it was agreed I should not hear from them. It is painful to be dependent on the small stimulus letters give. I sometimes think I will renounce it altogether, close all correspondence on some quiet pretext, and cease to look forward at post-time for any letters but yours."

“ 1850.

“ Ellen, it seems, told you that I spent a fortnight in London last December. They wished me very much to stay a month, alleging that I should in that time be able to secure a complete circle of acquaintance, but I found a fortnight of such excitement quite enough. The whole day was usually spent in sight-seeing, and often the evening was spent in society : it was more than I could bear for any length of time. On one occasion I met a party of my critics—seven of them. Some of them had been my bitter foes in print, but they were prodigiously civil face to face. These gentlemen seemed infinitely grander, more pompous, dashing, showy than the other few authors I saw. Mr. Thackeray, for example, is a man of very quiet, simple demeanor ; he is, however, looked upon with some awe and even distrust. His conversation is very peculiar, too perverse to be pleasant. It was proposed to me to see Charles Dickens, Lady Morgan, Mesdames Trollope, Gore, and some others ; but I was aware that these introductions would bring a degree of notoriety I was not disposed to encounter ; I declined therefore with thanks. Nothing charmed me more during my stay in town than the pictures I saw ; one or two private collections of Turner’s best water-colors were indeed a treat. His later oil paintings are strange things —things that baffle description. I have twice seen Macready act—once in *Macbeth*, and once in *Othello*. I astounded a dinner party by honestly saying I did not like him. It is the fashion to rave about his splendid acting ; anything more false and artificial, less genuinely impressive than his whole style, I could scarcely have imagined. The fact is, the stage system altogether is hollow nonsense. They act farces well enough ; the actors comprehend their parts,

and do them justice. They comprehend nothing about tragedy or Shakespeare, and it is a failure. I said so, and by so saying produced a blank silence, a mute consternation. I was indeed obliged to dissent on many occasions, and to offend by dissenting. It seems now very much the custom to admire a certain wordy, intricate, obscure style of poetry, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes. Some pieces were referred to, about which Currer Bell was expected to be very rapturous, and failing in this he disappointed. London people strike a provincial as being very much taken up with little matters, about which no one out of particular town circles cares much. They talk too of persons, literary men and women, whose names are scarcely heard in the country, and in whom you cannot get up an interest. I think I should scarcely like to live in London, and were I obliged to live there I should certainly go little in company—especially I should eschew the literary critics.”

[*To Ellen Nussey.*]

“ 1850.

“ I have, since you went, had a remarkable epistle from Thackeray—long, interesting, and characteristic ; but it unfortunately concludes with the strict injunction, Show this letter to no one ; adding that if he thought his letters were seen by others, he would either cease to write, or write only what was conventional. But for this circumstance I should have sent it with the others. I answered it at length. Whether my reply will give satisfaction or displeasure remains yet to be ascertained. Thackeray’s feelings are not such as can be

gauged by ordinary calculation : variable weather is what I should ever expect from that quarter. Yet in correspondence, as in verbal intercourse, this would torment me.”

[*To Miss Wooler.*]

“ HAWORTH, September 27, 1850.

. . . “ You say that you suspect I have formed a large circle of acquaintances by this time. No ; I cannot say that I have. I doubt whether I possess either the wish or the power to do so. A few friends I should like to have, and these few I should like to know well ; if such knowledge brought proportionate regard I could not help concentrating my feelings ; dissipation, I think, appears synonymous with dilution. However, I have, as yet, scarcely been tried. During the month I spent in London in the spring I kept very quiet : having the fear of lionizing before my eyes. I only went out once to dinner, and once was present at an evening party ; and the only visits I have paid have been to Sir James Kay Shuttleworth’s and my publishers. From this system I should not like to depart : as far as I can see, indiscriminate visiting tends only to a waste of time and a vulgarizing of character. Besides, it would be wrong to leave papa often ; he is now in his seventy-fifth year, the infirmities of age begin to creep upon him ; during the summer he has been much harassed by chronic bronchitis, but I am thankful to say he is now somewhat better. I think my own health has derived benefit from change and exercise.”

[*To her Publisher, who wrote her in reference to Phrenology, then attracting attention.*]

“ July 8, 1851.

. . . . “ I will not say look higher ! I think you see the matter as it is desirable we should all see what relates to ourselves. If I had a right to whisper a word of counsel, it should be merely this : whatever your present self may be, resolve with all your strength of resolution never to degenerate thence. Be jealous of a shadow of falling off. Determine rather to look above that standard, and to strive beyond it. Everybody appreciates certain social properties, and likes his neighbor for possessing them ; but perhaps few dwell upon a friend’s capacity for the intellectual, or care how this might expand, if there were but facilities allowed for cultivation, and space given for growth. It seems to me that, even should space and facilities be denied by stringent circumstances and a rigid fate, still it should do you good fully to know, and tenaciously to remember, that you have such a capacity. When other people overwhelm you with acquired knowledge such as you have not had opportunity, perhaps not application, to gain, derive not pride but support from the thought. If no new books had ever been written, some of these minds would themselves have remained blank pages : they only take an impression—they were not born with a record of thought on the brain, or an instinct of sensation on the heart. If I had never seen a printed volume, nature would have offered my perceptions a varying picture of a continuous narrative, which, without any teacher than herself, would have schooled me to knowledge, unsophisticated but genuine.”

"LONDON, June 12, 1850.

. . . "I have seen Lewes, too. . . I could not feel otherwise to him than half-sadly, half-tenderly—a queer word that last, but I use it because the aspect of Lewes' face almost moves me to tears ; it is so wonderfully like Emily—her eyes, her features, the very nose, the somewhat prominent mouth, the forehead—even at moments the expression : whatever Lewes says I believe I cannot hate him."

[*To Emily.*]

"HAWORTH, December 4.

"MY DEAR EMILY : Christmas—dear Christmas—is rapidly approaching, and the time is drawing on apace for your appearance among us again at the 'ingle nook.' I yearningly desire—after this prolonged separation—to press you once again to my heart, my dearest sister. What a joyful meeting on that day of all days—the anniversary of the birth of our blessed Redeemer ! The cold air is bracing and exhilarating as I open my window this genial morning in hoary December, and I have a rosy glow playing around my heart, for I am truly happy. *Et vous !*—ah, you too must be happy, for the chord, vibrating, is sympathetic, is responsive in your own dear breast. We have, in good sooth, both reason to thank the Giver of all things ; for have we not many blessings ? Do we not possess the great poetic faculty : the Ideal, the Mirthful, the Imitative ? Are we not both acknowledged authors ? The creative faculty makes us truly happy. If you start next Thursday week I will be waiting the coach ; do not hamper yourself with unnecessary clothes and luggage ; you can have everything here—even to the wearing of my old slippers, out a little at the toes."

[*To G. H. Lewes, Esq.*]

“ November 1, 1849.

“ MY DEAR SIR : It is about a year and a half since you wrote to me ; but it seems a longer period, because since then it has been my lot to pass some black milestones in the journey of life. Since then there have been intervals when I have ceased to care about literature, and critics, and fame ; when I have lost sight of whatever was prominent in my thoughts at the first publication of ‘Jane Eyre ;’ but now I want these things to come back vividly, if possible ; consequently it was a pleasure to receive your note. I wish you did not think me a woman. I wish all reviewers believed ‘Currer Bell’ to be a man : they would be more just to him. You will, I know, keep measuring me by some standard of what you deem becoming to my sex ; where I am not what you consider graceful, you will condemn me. All mouths will be open against that first chapter ; and that first chapter is true as the Bible, nor is it exceptional. Come what will, I cannot, when I write, think always of myself and of what is elegant and charming in feminity ; it is not on those terms, or with such ideas, I ever took pen in hand ; and if it is only on such terms my writing will be tolerated, I shall pass away from the public and trouble it no more. Out of obscurity I came, to obscurity I can easily return. Standing afar off, I now watch to see what will become of ‘Shirley.’ My expectations are very low, and my anticipations somewhat sad and bitter ; still, I earnestly conjure you to say honestly what you think ; flattery would be worse than vain ; there is no consolation in flattery. As for condemnation, I cannot, on reflection, see why I should much fear it ; there is no one but myself to suffer therefrom, and both happiness and

suffering in this life soon pass away. Wishing you all success in your Scottish expedition, I am, dear sir,

“ Yours, sincerely, C. BELL.”

[*To G. H. Lewes, Esq.*]

“ January 19, 1850.

“ MY DEAR SIR : I will tell you why I was so hurt by that review in the *Edinburgh*; not because its criticism was keen or its blame sometimes severe; not because its praise was stinted (for, indeed, I think you give quite as much praise as I deserve), but because after I had said earnestly that I wished critics would judge me as an *author*, not as a woman, you so roughly—I even thought so cruelly—handled the question of sex. I dare say you meant no harm, and perhaps you will not now be able to understand why I was so grieved at what you will probably deem such a trifle; but grieved I was, and indignant, too.

“ There was a passage or two which you did quite wrong to write.

“ However, I will not bear malice against you for it; I know what your nature is; it is not a bad or unkind one, though you would often jar terribly on some feelings with whose recoil and quiver you could not possibly sympathize. I imagine you are both enthusiastic and implacable, as you are at once sagacious and careless; you know much and discover much, but you are in such a hurry to tell it all you never give yourself time to think how your reckless eloquence may affect others; and, what is more, if you knew how it did affect them, you would not much care.

“ However, I shake hands with you: you have excellent

points ; you can be generous. I still feel angry, and think I do well to be angry ; but it is the anger one experiences for rough play rather than for foul play. I am yours, with a certain respect and more chagrin,

CURRER BELL."

" April 11, 1854.

" The result of Mr. Nicholls's visit is that Papa's consent is gained and his respect now, for Mr. Nicholls has in all things proved himself disinterested and forbearing. He has shown, too, that while his feelings are exquisitely keen, he can freely forgive. . . . In fact, dear Ellen, I am engaged. Mr. Nicholls in the course of a few months will return to the curacy of Haworth. I stipulated that I would not leave Papa, and to Papa himself I proposed a plan of residence which should maintain his seclusion and convenience uninvaded, and in a pecuniary sense bring him gain instead of loss. What seemed at one time impossible is now arranged, and Papa begins really to take pleasure in the prospect. For myself, dear E——, while thankful to one who seems to have guided me through much difficulty, much and deep distress and perplexity of mind, I am still very calm. . . . What I taste of happiness is of the soberest order. Providence offers me this destiny. Doubtless, then, it is best for me. Nor do I shrink from wishing those dear to me one not less happy. It is possible that our marriage may take place in the course of the summer. Mr. Nicholls wishes it to be in July. He spoke of you with great kindness, and said he hoped you would be at our wedding. I said I thought of having no other bridesmaid. Did I say right ? I mean the marriage to be literally *as quiet as possible*. Do not mention these things as yet. Good-by. There is a strange, half-sad feeling in making

these announcements. The whole thing is something other than the imagination paints it beforehand—cares, fears come mixed inextricably with hopes. I trust yet to talk the matter over with you.”

“ April 28, 1854.

“ Papa, thank God, continues to improve much. He preached twice on Sunday, and again on Wednesday, and was not tired. His mind and mood are different to what they were ; so much more cheerful and quiet. I trust the illusions of ambition are quite dissipated, and that he really sees it is better to relieve a suffering and faithful heart, to secure in its fidelity a solid good, than unfeelingly to abandon one who is truly attached to *his* interests, as well as mine, and pursue some vain, empty shadow.”

[*To Ellen Nussey.*.]

“ January, 1852.

“ I wish you could have seen the coolness with which I captured your letter on its way to Papa, and at once conjecturing its tenor, made the contents my own. Be quiet. Be tranquil. It is, dear Nell, my decided intention to come to B—— for a few days when I *can* come ; but of this last I must positively judge for myself, and I must take my time. I am better *to-day*—much better ; but you can have little idea of the sort of condition into which mercury throws people to ask me to go from home anywhere in close or open carriage. And as to talking, four days ago I could not well have articulated three sentences. Yet I did not need nursing, and I kept out of bed. It was enough to burden myself ; it would have been misery to me to have annoyed another.”

" HAWORTH, May 14, 1854.

" I took the time of the Leeds, Keighley, Skipton trains from the February time-table, and when I got to Leeds found myself all wrong. The trains on that line were changed. One had that moment left the station—indeed, it was just steaming away ; there was not another until a quarter after five o'clock ; so I had just four hours to sit and twirl my thumbs. I got over the time somehow, but I was vexed to think how much more pleasantly I might have spent it at B. It was just seven o'clock when I reached home. I found Papa well. It seems he has been particularly well during my absence, but to-day he is a little sickly, and only preached once. However, he is better again this evening. I could not leave you, dear Ellen, with a very quiet mind, or take away a satisfied feeling about you. Not that I think that bad cough lodged in a dangerous quarter ; but it shakes your system, wears you out, and makes you look ill. *Take care of it, do, dear Ellen. Avoid the evening air for a time ; keep in the house when the weather is cold.* Observe these precautions till the cough is quite gone, and you regain strength, and feel better able to bear chill and change. Believe me, it does not suit you at present to be much exposed to variations of temperature. I send the mantle with this, but have made up my mind not to let you have the cushion now, lest you should sit stitching over it too closely. It will do any time, and whenever it comes will be your present all the same."

" HAWORTH, May 22, 1854.

" I wonder how you are, and whether that harassing cough is better ; but I am afraid the variable weather of last week will not be favorable to improvement. I *will* not and *do* not

believe the cough lies on any vital organ. Still it is a mark of weakness, and a warning to be scrupulously careful about undue exposure. Just now, dear Ellen, an hour's inadvertence might derange your whole constitution for years to come—might throw you into a state of chronic ill-health which would waste, fade, and wither you up prematurely. So, once and again, TAKE CARE. If you go to —, or any other evening party, pack yourself in blankets and a feather-bed to come home, also fold your boa twice over your mouth, to serve as a respirator. Since I came home I have been very busy sketching. The little new room is got into order now, and the green and white curtains are up. They exactly suit the papering, and look neat and clean enough. I had a letter a day or two since, announcing that Mr. N. comes to-morrow. I feel anxious about him—more anxious on one point than I dare quite to express myself. It seems he has again been suffering sharply from his rheumatic affection. I hear this not from himself, but from another quarter. He was ill while I was at Manchester and B. He uttered no complaint to me, dropped no hint on the subject. Alas ! he was hoping he had got the better of it ; and I know how this contradiction of his hopes will sadden him. For unselfish reasons, he did so earnestly wish this complaint might not become chronic. I fear, I fear—but, however, I mean to stand by him now, whether in weal or woe. This liability to rheumatic pain was one of the strong arguments used against the marriage. It did not weigh, somehow. If he is doomed to suffer, it seems that so much the more will he need care and help. And yet the ultimate possibilities of such a case are appalling. Well, come what may, God help and strengthen both him and me. I look forward to to-morrow with a mixture of impatience and

anxiety. Poor fellow ! I want to see with my own eyes how he is."

" HAWORTH, September 16, 1854.

" MY DEAR MISS ——: You kindly tell me not to write while Ellen is with me : I am expecting her this week ; and as I think it would be wrong long to defer answering a letter like yours, I will reduce to practice the maxim, ' There is no time like the present,' and do it at once. It grieves me that you should have any anxiety about my health ; the cough left me before I quitted Ireland, and since my return home I have scarcely had an ailment except occasional headaches. My dear father, too, continues much better. Dr. B—— was here on Sunday, preaching a sermon for the Jews, and he gratified me much by saying that he thought Papa not at all altered since he saw him last—nearly a year ago. I am afraid this opinion is rather flattering ; but still it gave me pleasure, for I had feared that he looked undeniably thinner and older. You ask what visitors we have had. A good many among the clergy, etc., in the neighborhood, but none of note from a distance. Haworth is, as you say, a very quiet place ; it is also difficult of access, and unless under the stimulus of necessity, or that of strong curiosity, or finally, that of true and tried friendship, few take courage to penetrate to so remote a nook. Besides, now that I am married, I do not expect to be an object of such general interest. Ladies who have won some prominence (call it either notoriety or celebrity) in their single life often fall quite in the background when they change their names. But if true domestic happiness replace fame, the change is indeed for the better. Yes, I am thankful to say my husband is in improved health and spirits. It makes

me content and grateful to hear him from time to time avow his happiness in the brief but plain phrase of sincerity. My own life is more occupied than it used to be ; I have not so much time for thinking : I am obliged to be more practical, for my dear Arthur is a very practical as well as a very punctual, methodical man. Every morning he is in the national school by nine o'clock ; he gives the children religious instruction until half-past ten. Almost every afternoon he pays visits among the poor parishioners. Of course he often finds a little work for his wife to do, and I hope she is not sorry to help him. I believe it is not bad for me that his bent should be so wholly toward matters of real life and active usefulness—so little inclined to the literary and contemplative. As to his continued affection and kind attentions, it does not become me to say much of them ; but as yet they neither change nor diminish. I wish, my dear Miss —, you had some kind, faithful companion to enliven your solitude at R—, some friend to whom to communicate your pleasure in the scenery, the fine weather, the pleasant walks. You never complain, never murmur, never seem otherwise than thankful ; but I know you must miss a privilege none could more keenly appreciate than yourself.”

[This letter of Charlotte Bronté's, and the succeeding one, written by Miss Ellen Nussey, describe the last journey made with Anne Bronté, and her death.]

“ Next Wednesday is the day fixed for our departure ; Ellen accompanies us, at her own kind and friendly wish. I would not refuse her society, but dared not urge her to go, for I have little hope that the excursion will be one of pleasure or benefit

to those engaged in it. Anne is extremely weak. She herself has a fixed impression that the sea-air will give her a chance of regaining strength. That chance, therefore, she must have. Having resolved to try the experiment, misgivings are useless, and yet when I look at her, misgivings will rise. She is more emaciated than Emily was at the very last ; her breath scarcely serves her to mount the stairs, however slowly. She sleeps very little at night, and often passes most of the afternoon in a semi-lethargic state. Still, she is up all day, and even goes out a little when it is fine. Fresh air usually acts as a temporary stimulus, but its reviving power diminishes.”

“ On our way to Scarborough we stopped at York, and after a rest at the George Hotel, and partaking of dinner, which she enjoyed, Anne went out in a bath chair, and made purchases, along with Charlotte, of bonnets and dresses, besides visiting the minister. The morning after her arrival at Scarborough she insisted on going to the baths, and would be left there with only the attendant in charge. She walked back alone to her lodgings, but fell exhausted as she reached the garden gate. She never named this, but it was discovered afterward. The same day she had a drive in a donkey carriage, and talked with the boy driver on kindness for animals. On Sunday she wanted again to be left alone, and for us to go to church. Finding we would not leave her, she begged that she might go out, and we walked down toward the saloon, she resting half way, and sending us on with the excuse that she wanted us to see that place, this being our first visit, though not hers. In the evening, after again asking us to go to church, she sat by the sitting-room window, enjoying a very glorious sunset. Next morning (the day she died) she rose by seven o’clock and

dressed herself, refusing all assistance. She was the first of the little party to be ready to go down stairs ; but when she reached the head of the stairs she felt fearful of descending. Charlotte went to her, and discovered this.

“ I, fancying there was some difficulty, left my room to see what it was, when Anne smiling told me she felt afraid of the steps downward. I immediately said, ‘ Let me try to carry you ;’ she looked pleased, but feared for me. Charlotte was angry at the idea, and greatly distressed. I could see, at this, new evidence of Anne’s weakness. Charlotte was at last persuaded to go to her room and leave us. I then went a step or two below Anne, and begged her to put her arms around my neck, and I said, ‘ I will carry you like a baby.’ Strength seemed to be given for the effort, but on reaching the foot of the stairs poor Anne’s head fell like a leaden weight upon the top of mine. The shock was terrible, for I felt it could only be death that was coming. I just managed to bear her to the front of her easy-chair and drop her into it, falling myself on my knees before her, very miserable at the fact, and letting her fall at last, though it was not into her chair. She was shaken; but she put out her arms to comfort me, and said, ‘ You know it could not be helped, you did your best.’ After this she sat at the breakfast table and partook of a basin of boiled milk prepared for her. As 11 A.M. approached, she wondered if she could be conveyed home in time to die there. At 2 P.M. death had come, and left only her beautiful form in the sweetest peace.”



## SELECTIONS.

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THE FOLLOWING SELECTIONS FROM ALL THAT SHE HAS WRITTEN WILL ENABLE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT READ THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ TO GET A CORRECT IDEA OF HER LITERARY STYLE AND METHOD OF COMPOSITION :

### ROCHESTER'S ANALYSIS OF JANE EYRE'S CHARACTER.

THE flame flickers in the eye—the eye shines like dew , it looks soft and full of feeling—it smiles at my jargon—it is susceptible ; impression follows impression through its clear sphere ; when it ceases to smile, it is sad—an unconscious lassitude weighs on the lid, that signifies melancholy resulting from loneliness ; it turns from me ; it will not suffer further scrutiny ; it seems to deny, by a mocking glance, the truth of the discoveries I have already made—to disown the charge both of sensibility and chagrin ; its pride and reserve only confirm me in my opinion. The eye is favorable.

As to the mouth, it delights at times in laughter ; it is disposed to impart all that the brain conceives, though, I dare say, it would be silent on much the heart experiences. Mobile and flexible, it was never intended to be compressed in the

eternal silence of solitude ; it is a mouth which should speak much and smile often, and have human affection for its interlocutor. That feature, too, is propitious.

I see no enemy to a fortunate issue but in the brow ; and that brow professes to say—“ I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me so to do. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss. I have an inward treasure, born with me, which can keep me alive if all extraneous delights should be withheld, or offered only at a price I cannot afford to give.” The forehead declares—“ Reason sits firm and holds the reins, and she will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms. The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are, and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things ; but judgment shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision. Strong wind, earthquake shock, and fire may pass by, I shall follow the guiding but of that still small voice which interprets the dictates of conscience.”

Well said, forehead ; your declaration shall be respected. I have formed my plans—right plans I deem them—and in them I have attended to the claims of conscience, the counsels of reason. I know how soon youth would fade and bloom perish, if, in the cup of bliss offered, but one dredg of shame or one flavor of remorse were detected ; and I do not want sacrifice, sorrow, dissolution—such is not my taste. I wish to foster, not to blight—to earn gratitude, not to wring tears of blood—no, not of brine ; my harvest must be in smiles, in endearments, in sweet—that will do. I think I rave in a kind of exquisite delirium. I should wish now to protract this moment *ad infinitum*, but I dare not. So far I have governed myself thoroughly. I have acted as I inwardly swore I would act ;

but farther might try me beyond my strength. Rise, Miss Eyre, leave me ; “the play is played out.”

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Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent expectant woman—almost a bride—was a cold solitary girl again ; her life was pale ; her prospects were desolate. A Christmas frost had come at midsummer ; a white December storm had whirled over June ; ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses ; on hay-field and corn-field lay a frozen shroud ; lanes which last night blushed full of flowers, to-day were pathless with untrodden snow ; and the woods which twelve hours since waved leafy and fragrant as groves between the tropics, now spread waste, wild, and white as pine forests in wintry Norway. My hopes were all dead—struck with a subtle doom, such as in one night fell on all the first-born in the land of Egypt. I looked on my cherished wishes, yesterday so blooming and glowing ; they lay stark, still, livid corpses that could never revive. I looked at my love ; that feeling which was my master’s—which he had created ; it shivered in my heart, like a suffering child in a cold cradle ; sickness and anguish had seized it ; it could not seek Mr. Rochester’s arms—it could not derive warmth from his breast. Oh, never more could it turn to him ; for faith was blighted—confidence destroyed ! Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been ; for he was not what I had thought him. I would not ascribe vice to him ; I would not say he had betrayed me ; but the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea ; and from his presence I must go ; *that* I perceived well. When—how, whither, I could not yet discern ; but he himself, I doubted not, would hurry from Thornfield. Real affection, it seemed, he could not have for me ; it had been only fitful passion ;

that was balked ; he would want me no more. I should fear even to cross his path now ; my view must be hateful to him. Oh, how blind had been my eyes ! How weak my conduct !

My eyes were covered and closed ; eddying darkness seemed to swim round me, and reflection came in as black and confused a flow. Self-abandoned, relaxed and effortless, I seemed to have laid me down in the dried-up bed of a great river ; I heard a flood loosened in remote mountains, I felt the torrent come : to rise I had no will, to flee I had no strength. I lay faint, longing to be dead. One idea only throbbed lifelike within me—a remembrance of God : it begot an unuttered prayer : these words went wandering up and down in my rayless mind, as something that should be whispered ; but no energy was found to express them.

“ Be not far from me, for trouble is near ; there is none to help.”

It was near ; and as I had lifted no petition to heaven to avert it—as I had neither joined my hands, nor bent my knees, nor moved my lips—it came : in full, heavy swing, the torrent poured over me. The whole consciousness of my life lorn, my love lost, my hope quenched, my faith death-struck, swayed full and mighty above me in one sullen mass. That bitter hour cannot be described ; in truth, “ the waters came into my soul ; I sunk in deep mire ; I felt no standing ; I came into deep waters ; the floods overflowed me.”

That night I never thought to sleep, but a slumber fell on me as soon as I lay down in bed. I was transported in thought to the scenes of childhood : I dreamed that I lay in the bed room at Gateshead ; that the night was dark, and my mind impressed with strange fears. The light that long ago

had struck me into syncope, recalled in this vision, seemed glidingly to mount the wall, and tremblingly to pause in the centre of the obscured ceiling. I lifted up my head to look ; the roof resolved to clouds, high and dim ; the gleam was such as the moon imparts to vapors she is about to sever. I watched her come, watched with the strangest anticipation, as though some word of doom were to be written on her disk. She broke forth as never moon yet burst from cloud ; a hand first penetrated the sable folds and waved them away, then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit ; immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart :

“ My daughter, flee temptation !”

“ Mother, I will.”

So I answered after I had waked from the trance-like dream. It was yet night, but July nights are short ; soon after midnight, dawn comes. “ It cannot be too early to commence the task I have to fulfil,” thought I.

### HER VISION.

I was excited more than I had ever been ; and whether what followed was the effect of excitement, the reader shall judge.

All the house was still ; for I believe all, except St. John and myself, were now retired to rest. The one candle was dying out ; the room was full of moonlight. My heart beat fast and thick ; I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities. The feeling was not like an electric shock ; but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as start-

ling ; it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor, from which they were now summoned, and forced to wake. They rose expectant ; eye and ear waited, while the flesh quivered on my bones.

“ What have you heard ? What do you see ? ” asked St. John. I saw nothing ; but I heard a voice somewhere cry :

“ Jane ! Jane ! Jane ! ” nothing more.

“ Oh, God ! what is it ? ” I gasped.

I might have said, “ Where is it ? ” for it did not seem in the room—nor in the house—nor in the garden ; it did not come out of the air—nor from under the earth—nor from overhead. I had heard it—where or whence, forever impossible to know ! And it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, well-remembered voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester ; and it spoke in pain and woe—wildly, eerily, urgently.

“ I am coming ! ” I cried. “ Wait for me ! Oh, I will come ! ” I flew to the door, and looked into the passage ; it was dark. I ran out into the garden ; it was void.

“ Where are you ? ” I exclaimed.

The hills beyond Marsh-Glen sent the answer faintly back, “ Where are you ? ” I listened. The wind sighed low in the firs ; all was moorland loneliness and midnight hush.

“ Down superstition ! ” I commented, as that spectre rose up black by the black yew at the gate. “ This is not thy deception, nor thy witchcraft ; it is the work of nature. She was roused, and did—no miracle—but her best.”

I broke from St. John, who had followed, and would have detained me. It was *my* turn to assume ascendancy. *My* powers were in play, and in force. I told him to forbear question or remark ; I desired him to leave me ; I must, and would be alone. He obeyed at once. Where there is energy to

command well enough, obedience never fails. I mounted to my chamber ; locked myself in ; fell on my knees ; and prayed in my way—a different way to St. John's, but effective in its own fashion. I seemed to penetrate very near a Mighty Spirit ; and my soul rushed out in gratitude at his feet. I rose from the thanksgiving—took a resolve and lay down, unscared, enlightened—eager but for the daylight.

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It wanted yet two hours of breakfast time. I filled the interval in walking softly about my room, and pondering the visitation which had given my plans their present bent. I recalled that inward sensation I had experienced, for I could recall it with all its unspeakable strangeness. I recalled the voice I had heard ; again I questioned whence it came, as vainly as before. It seemed in *me*—not in the external world. I asked, was it a mere nervous impression—a delusion ? I could not conceive or believe it ; it was more like an inspiration. The wondrous shock of feeling had come like the earthquake which shook the foundation of Paul and Silas's prison ; it had opened the doors of the soul's cell, and loosed its bands—it had wakened it out of its sleep, whence it sprung, trembling, listening, aghast ; then vibrated thrice a cry on my startled ear, and in my quaking heart, and through my spirit, which neither feared nor shook, but exulted as if in joy over the success of one effort it had been privileged to make, independent of the cumbrous body.

“ Ere many days,” I said, as I terminated my musings, “ I will know something of him whose voice seemed last night to summon me. Letters have proved of no avail—personal inquiry shall replace them.”

## HIS VISION.

Some days since—nay, I can number them, four ; it was last Monday night, a singular mood came over me ; one in which grief replaced frenzy ; sorrow, sullenness. I had long had the impression that since I could nowhere find you, you must be dead. Late that night, perhaps it might be between eleven and twelve o'clock, ere I retired to my dreary rest, I supplicated God, that, if it seemed good to him, I might soon be taken from this life, and admitted to that world to come, where there was still hope of rejoining Jane.

I was in my own room, and sitting by the window, which was open ; it soothed me to feel the balmy night air, though I could see no stars, and only by a vague, luminous haze, knew the presence of a moon. I longed for thee, Janet ! Oh, I longed for thee both with soul and flesh ! I asked of God, at once in anguish and humility, if I had not been long enough desolate, afflicted, tormented, and might not soon taste bliss and peace once more. That I merited all I endured, I acknowledged ; that I could scarcely endure more, I pleaded ; and the alpha and omega of my heart's wishes broke involuntarily from my lips, in the words, “Jane ! Jane ! Jane !”

“Did you speak these words aloud ?”

“I did, Jane. If any listener had heard me he would have thought me mad, I pronounced them with such frantic energy.”

“And it was last Monday night ; somewhere near midnight ?”

“Yes ; but the time is of no consequence ; what followed is the strange point. You will think me superstitious—some superstition I have in my blood, and always had ; nevertheless, this is true—true, at least, it is that I heard what I now relate.

" As I exclaimed ' Jane ! Jane ! Jane ! ' a voice—I cannot tell whence the voice came, but I know whose voice it was—replied, ' I am coming ; wait for me ! ' and a moment after, went whispering on the wind, the words, ' Where are you ? '

" I'll tell you, if I can, the idea, the picture these words opened to my mind ; yet it is difficult to express what I want to express. Ferndean is buried, as you see, in a heavy wood, where sound falls dull, and lies unreverberating. ' Where are you ? ' seemed spoken among mountains, for I heard a hill-sent echo repeat the words. Cooler and fresher at the moment the gale seemed to visit my brow ; I could have deemed that in some wild, lone scene, I and Jane were meeting. In spirit, I believe, we must have met. You, no doubt, were, at that hour, in unconscious sleep, Jane ; perhaps your soul wandered from its soul to comfort mine ; for those were your accents—as certain as I live—they were yours ! "

Reader, it was on Monday night, near midnight, that I too had received the mysterious summons ; those were the very words by which I had replied to it. I listened to Mr. Rochester's narrative, but made no disclosure in return. The coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed. If I told anything, my tale would be such as must necessarily make a profound impression on the mind of my hearer ; and that mind, yet from its sufferings too prone to gloom, needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural. I kept these things, then, and pondered them in my heart.

Presentiments are strange things ! and so are sympathies, and so are signs ; and the three combined make one mystery to which humanity has not yet found the key. I never laughed at presentiments in my life, because I have had strange ones of my own. Sympathies, I believe, exist (for instance, between

far-distant, long-absent, wholly estranged relatives ; asserting, notwithstanding their alienation, the unity of the source to which each traces his origin), whose workings baffle mortal comprehension. And signs, for aught we know, may be but the sympathies of nature with man.

When I was a little girl, only six years old, I one night heard Bessie Leaven say to Martha Abbott that she had been dreaming about a little child ; and that to dream of children was a sure sign of trouble, either to one's self or one's kin. The saying might have worn out of my memory, had not a circumstance immediately followed which served indelibly to fix it there. The next day Bessie was sent for home to the death-bed of her little sister.

Of late I had often recalled this saying and this incident ; for during the past week scarcely a night had gone over my couch that had not brought with it a dream of an infant, which I sometimes hushed in my arms, sometimes dandled on my knee, sometimes watched playing with daisies on a lawn ; or again, dabbling its hands in running water. It was a wailing child this night, and a laughing one the next—now it nestled close to me, and now it ran away from me ; but whatever mood the apparition evinced, whatever aspect it wore, it failed not for seven successive nights to meet me the moment I entered the land of slumber.

I did not like this iteration of one idea—this strange recurrence of one image ; and I grew nervous as bedtime came. Night was come, and her planets were risen ; a safe, still night ; too serene for the companionship of fear. We know that God is everywhere, but certainly we feel his presence most when his works are on the grandest scale spread before us ; and it is in the unclouded night-sky, where his worlds wheel their silent

course, that we read clearest his infinitude, his omnipotence, his omnipresence. I had risen to my knees to pray for Mr. Rochester. Looking up, I, with tear-dimmed eyes, saw the mighty milky-way. Remembering what it was—what countless systems there swept space like a soft trace of light—I felt the might and strength of God. Sure was I of his efficiency to save what he had made ; convinced I grew that neither earth should perish, nor one of the souls it treasured. I turned my prayer to thanksgiving ; the Source of Life was also the Saviour of Spirits. Mr. Rochester was safe ; he was God's, and by God would be guarded. I again nestled to the breast of the hill ; and ere-long, in sleep, forgot sorrow.

#### DUTY OF FATHERS TO DAUGHTERS.

I believe single women should have more to do—better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now. Could men live so themselves ? Would they not be very weary ? And, when there came no relief to their weariness, but only reproaches at its slightest manifestation would not their weariness ferment in time to frenzy ? Lucretia, spinning at midnight in the midst of her maidens, and Solomon's virtuous woman, are often quoted as patterns of what “the sex” (as they say) ought to be. I don't know. Lucretia, I daresay, was a most worthy sort of a person, much like my cousin Hortense Moore ; but she kept her servants up very late. I should not have liked to be among the number of the maidens. Hortense would just work me and Sarah in that fashion if she could, and neither of us would bear it. The “virtuous woman,” again, had her household up in the very middle of the night ; she “got breakfast over” (as Mrs. Sykes

says) before one o'clock A.M.; but *she* had something more to do than spin and give out portions; she was a manufacturer—she made fine linen and sold it; she was an agriculturist—she bought estates and planted vineyards. *That* woman was a manager; she was what the matrons hereabouts call “a clever woman.” On the whole, I like her a good deal better than Lucretia; but I don’t believe either Mr. Armitage or Mr. Sykes could have got the advantage of her in a bargain; yet I like her. “Strength and honor were her clothing; the heart of her husband safely trusted in her. She opened her mouth with wisdom; in her tongue was the law of kindness; her children rose up and called her blessed; her husband also praised her.” King of Israel! your model of a woman is a worthy model! But are we, in these days, brought up to be like her? Men of Yorkshire, do your daughters reach this royal standard? Can they reach it? Can you help them to reach it? Can you give them a field in which their faculties may be exercised and grow? Men of England! look at your poor girls, many of them fading around you, dropping off in consumption or decline; or, what is worse, degenerating to sour old maids—envious, backbiting, wretched, because life is a desert to them; or, what is worst of all, reduced to strive, by scarce modest coquetry and debasing artifice, to gain that position and consideration by marriage which to celibacy is denied. Fathers! cannot you alter these things? Perhaps not all at once; but consider the matter well when it is brought before you, receive it as a theme worthy of thought; do not dismiss it with an idle jest or an unmanly insult. You would wish to be proud of your daughters and not to blush for them—then seek for them an interest and an occupation which shall raise them above the flirt, the manœuvrer, the mischief-making tale-

bearer. Keep your girls' minds narrow and fettered—they will still be a plague and a care, sometimes a disgrace to you ; cultivate them—give them scope and work—they will be your gayest companions in health ; your tenderest nurses in sickness ; your most faithful props in age.

### BRITISH TRADESMEN.

All men, taken singly, are more or less selfish ; and taken in bodies they are intensely so. The British merchant is no exception to this rule : the mercantile classes illustrate it strikingly. These classes certainly think too exclusively of making money ; they are too oblivious of every national consideration but that of extending England's (*i.e.* their own) commerce. Chivalrous feeling, disinterestedness, pride in honor, is too dead in their hearts. A land ruled by them alone would too often make ignominious submission—not at all from the motives Christ teaches, but rather from those Mammon instils. During the late war, the tradesmen of England would have endured buffets from the French on the right cheek and on the left ; their cloak they would have given to Napoleon, and then have politely offered him their coat also, nor would they have withheld their waistcoat if urged ; they would have prayed permission only to retain their one other garment, for the sake of the purse in its pocket. Not one spark of spirit, not one symptom of resistance would they have shown till the hand of the Corsican bandit had grasped that beloved purse ; *then*, perhaps, transfigured at once into British bull-dogs, they would have sprung at the robber's throat, and there they would have fastened, and there hung—inveterate, insatiable, till the treasure had been restored. Tradesmen, when they speak

against war, always profess to hate it because it is a bloody and barbarous proceeding ; you would think, to hear them talk, that they are peculiarly civilized—especially gentle and kindly of disposition to their fellow-men. This is not the case. Many of them are extremely narrow and cold-hearted, have no good feeling for any class but their own, are distant—even hostile to all others ; call them useless ; seem to question their right to exist ; seem to grudge them the very air they breathe, and to think the circumstance of their eating, drinking, and living in decent houses, quite unjustifiable. They do not know what others do in the way of helping, pleasing, or teaching their race ; they will not trouble themselves to inquire ; whoever is not in trade, is accused of eating the bread of idleness, of passing a useless existence. Long may it be ere England really becomes a nation of shopkeepers !

#### LOVERS, MASCULINE AND FEMININE.

A lover masculine so disappointed can speak and urge explanation ; a lover feminine can say nothing ; if she did, the result would be shame and anguish, inward remorse for self-treachery. Nature would brand such demonstration as a rebellion against her instincts, and would vindictively repay it afterward by the thunderbolt of self-contempt smiting suddenly in secret. Take the matter as you find it : ask no questions, utter no remonstrances. It is your best wisdom. You expected bread, and you have got a stone ; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyred ; do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's—the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion.

Show no consternation. Close your fingers firmly upon the gift : let it sting through your palm. Never mind. In time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test—some, it is said, die under it—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. This you are not aware of, perhaps, at the time, and so cannot borrow courage of that hope. Nature, however, as has been intimated, is an excellent friend in such cases, sealing the lips, interdicting utterance, commanding a placid dissimulation—a dissimulation often wearing an easy and gay mien at first, setting down to sorrow and paleness in time, then passing away, and leaving a convenient stoicism, not the less fortifying because it is half bitter.

Half bitter ! Is that wrong ? No—it should be bitter ; bitterness is strength—it is a tonic. Sweet mild force following acute suffering you find nowhere : to talk of it is delusion. There may be apathetic exhaustion after the rack ; if energy remains, it will be rather a dangerous energy—deadly when confronted with injustice.

Who has read the ballad of “ Puir Mary Lee ?”—that old Scotch ballad, written I know not in what generation nor by what hand. Mary had been ill-used—probably in being made to believe that truth which was falsehood. She is not complaining, but she is sitting alone in the snow-storm, and you hear her thoughts. They are not the thoughts of a model heroine under her circumstances, but they are those of a deeply-feeling, strongly-resentful peasant girl. Anguish has driven her from the ingle-nook of home to the white-shrouded and icy hills. Crouched under the “ cauld drift,” she recalls every image of

horror : “ the yellow-wymed ask,” “ the hairy adder,” “ the auld moon-brewing-tyke,” “ the ghaist at e'en,” “ the sour bullister,” “ the milk on the taed's back.” She hates these, but “ waur she hates Robin-a-Ree !”

“ Oh, ance I lived happily by yon bonny burn—  
The warld was in love wi' me ;  
But now I maun sit 'neath the cauld drift and mourn,  
And curse black Robin-a-Ree !

“ Then whudder awa' thou bitter biting blast,  
And sough through the scrunity tree,  
And smoor me up in the snaw fu'fast,  
And ne'er let the sun me see !

“ Oh, ne'er melt awa' thou wreath o' snaw,  
That's sae kind in graving me ;  
But hide me frae the scorn and guffaw  
O' villains like Robin-a-Ree.”

The gray church and grayer tombs looked divine with this crimson gleam on them. Nature is now at her evening prayers ; she is kneeling before those red hills. I see her prostrate on the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair night for mariners at sea, for travellers in deserts, for lambs on moors, and unfledged birds in woods. She is like what Eve was when she and Adam stood alone on earth.

Well, life is short at the best ; seventy years, they say, pass like a vapor—like a dream when one awaketh ; and every path trod by human feet terminates in one bourne—the grave ; the little chink in the surface of this great globe—the furrow where the mighty husbandman with the scythe deposits the seed he has shaken from the ripe stem ; and there it falls,

decays, and thence it springs again, when the world has rolled round a few times more. So much for the body ; the soul meantime wings its long flight upward, folds its wings on the brink of the sea of fire and glass, and gazing down through the burning clearness, finds there mirrored the vision of the Christian's triple Godhead : the Sovereign Father, the Mediating Son, the Creator Spirit. Such words, at least, have been chosen to express what is inexpressible ; to describe what baffles description. The soul's rest hereafter, who shall guess ?

Reader, when you behold an aspect for whose constant gloom and frown you cannot account, whose unvarying cloud exasperates you by its apparent causelessness, be sure that there is a canker somewhere, and a canker not the less deeply corroding because concealed.

Let England's priests have their due ; they are a faulty set in some respects, being only of common flesh and blood, like us all ; but the land would be badly off without them ; Britain would miss her church, if that church fell. God save it ! God also reform it !

It was a peaceful autumn day. The gilding of the Indian summer mellowed the pastures far and wide. The russet woods stood ripe to be stripped, but were yet full of leaf. The purple of heath bloom, faded but not withered, tinged the hills. The beck wandered down to the Hollow through a silent district ; no wind followed its course, or haunted its woody borders. Fieldhead gardens bore the seal of gentle decay. On the walls, swept that morning, yellow leaves had fluttered down

again. Its time of flowers, and even of fruits, was over ; but a scantling of apples enriched the trees ; only a blossom here and there expanded pale and delicate amid a knot of faded leaves.

Oh, child ! the human heart *can* suffer. It can hold more tears than the ocean holds waters. We never know how deep, how wide it is, till misery begins to unbind her clouds, and fill it with rushing blackness.

What is that electricity they speak of, whose changes makes us well or ill ; whose lack or excess blasts ; whose even balance revives ? What are all those influences that are about us in the atmosphere, that keep playing over our nerves like fingers on stringed instruments, and call forth now a sweet note, and now a wail—now an exultant swell, and anon the saddest cadence ?

*Where is the other world ? In what will another life consist ? Why do I ask ? Have I not cause to think that the hour is hastening but too fast when the veil must be rent for me ? Do I not know the grand mystery is likely to burst prematurely on me ? Great Spirit, in whose goodness I confide, whom, as my Father, I have petitioned night and morning from early infancy, help the weak creation of thy hands ! Sustain me through the ordeal I dread and must undergo ! Give me strength ! Give me patience ! Give me—oh, give me faith !*

Sisters do not like young ladies to fall in love with their brothers : it seems, if not presumptuous, silly, weak, a delu-

sion, an absurd mistake. *They* do not love these gentlemen—whatever sisterly affection they may cherish toward them—and that others should, repels them with a sense of crude romance. The first movement, in short, excited by such discovery (as with many parents on finding their children to be in love) is one of mixed impatience and contempt. Reason—if they be rational people—corrects the false feeling in time ; but if they be irrational, it is never corrected, and the daughter or sister-in-law is disliked to the end.

Still indomitable was the reply, “*I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation ; they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigor ; stringent are they ; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth ? They have a worth, so I have always believed ; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane, quite insane, with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations are all I have at this hour to stand by ; there I plant my foot.”*

I hate boldness—that boldness which is of the brassy brow and insensate nerves ; but I love the courage of the strong heart, the fervor of the generous blood.

Look at the rigid and formal race of old maids—the race whom all despise ; they have fed themselves from youth up-

ward on maxims of resignation and endurance. Many of them get ossified with their dry diet. Self-control is so continually their thought, so perpetually their object, that at last it absorbs the softer and more agreeable qualities of their nature, and they are mere models of austerity, fashioned out of a little parchment and much bone.

There are impulses we can control, but there are others which control us, because they attain us with a tiger-leap, and are our masters ere we have seen them.

No man likes to acknowledge that he has made a mistake in the choice of his profession, and every man worthy of the name will row against wind and tide before he allows himself to cry out, "I am baffled," and submits to be floated passively back to land.

Yes, at that epoch I felt like a morning traveller who doubts not that from the hill he is ascending he shall behold a glorious sunrise. What if the track be strait, steep, and stony ? he sees it not ; his eyes are fixed on that summit, flushed already ; flushed and gilded, and, having gained it, he is certain of the scene beyond. He knows that the sun will face him, that his chariot is even now coming over the eastern horizon, and that the herald breeze he feels on his cheek is opening for the god's career a clear, vast path of azure, amid clouds soft as pearl and warm as flame. Difficulty and toil were to be my lot, but sustained by energy, drawn on by hopes as bright as vague, I deemed such a lot no hardship. I mounted now the hill in the shade ; there were pebbles, inequalities, briers in my path, but my eyes were fixed on the crimson peak above ; my imagination

was with the resplendent firmament beyond, and I thought nothing of the stones turning under my feet, or of the thorns scratching my face and hands.

God knows I am not by nature vindictive. I would not hurt a man because I can no longer trust or like him ; but neither my reason nor my feelings are of the vacillating order ; they are not of that sandlike sort where impressions, if soon made, are as soon effaced. Once convinced that my friend's disposition is incompatible with my own, once assured that he it is indelibly stained with certain defects obnoxious to my principles, and I dissolve the connection.

Our likings are regulated by our circumstances. The artist prefers a hilly country because it is picturesque ; the engineer a flat one because it is convenient ; the man of pleasure likes what he calls "a fine woman," she suits him ; the fashionable young gentleman admires the fashionable young lady : she is of his kind ; the toilworn, fagged, probably irritable tutor, blind almost to beauty, insensible to airs and graces, glories chiefly in certain mental qualities ; application, love of knowledge, natural capacity, docility, truthfulness, gratefulness, are the charms that attract his notice and win his regard. These he seeks, but seldom meets ; these, if by chance he finds, he would retain forever ; and, when separation deprives him of them, he feels as if some ruthless hand had snatched from him his only ewe lamb.

People who are only in each other's company for amusement never really like each other so well, or esteem each other so highly, as those who work together, and perhaps suffer together.

Novelists should never allow themselves to weary of the study of real life. If they observed this duty conscientiously, they would give us fewer pictures checkered with vivid contrasts of light and shade ; they would seldom elevate their heroes and heroines to the heights of rapture, still seldom sink them to the depths of despair ; for, if we rarely taste the fulness of joy in this life, we yet more rarely govern the acrid bitterness of hopeless anguish ; unless, indeed, we have plunged like beasts into sensual indulgence, abused, strained, stimulated, again overstrained, and, at last, destroyed our faculties for enjoyment ; then truly, we may find ourselves without support, robbed of hope. Our agony is great, and how can it end ? We have broken the spring of our powers ; life must be all suffering—too feeble to conceive faith ; death must be darkness ; God, spirits, religion can have no place in our collapsed minds, where linger only hideous and polluting recollections of vice, and time brings us on to the brink of the grave, and dissolution flings us in, a rag eaten with pain, stamped into the chuirchyard sod by the inexorable heel of despair.

But the man of regular life and rational mind never despairs. He loses his property—it is a blow—he staggers a moment ; then his energies, roused by the smart, are at work to seek a remedy, activity soon mitigates regret. Sickness affects him ; he takes patience—endures what he cannot cure. Acute pain racks him ; his writhing limbs know not where to find rest ; he leans on Hope's anchor. Death takes from him what he loves ; roots up and tears violently away the stem round which his affections were twined—a dark, dismal time, a frightful wrench ; but some morning religion looks into his desolate house with sunrise, and says that in another world, another

life, he shall meet his kindred again. She speaks of that world as a place unsullied by sin—of that life as an era unim-bittered by suffering ; she mightily strengthens her consolation by connecting with it two ideas—which mortals cannot comprehend, but on which they love to repose—Eternity, Immortality ; and the mind of the mourner being filled with an image, faint yet glorious—of heavenly hills all light and peace —of a spirit resting there in bliss—of a day when his spirit shall also alight there, free and disembodied—of a reunion perfected by love, purified from fear, he takes courage—goes out to encounter the necessities and discharge the duties of life ; and, though sadness may never lift her burden from his mind, Hope will enable him to support it.

On my reason had been inscribed the conviction that unlawful pleasure, trenching on another's rights, is delusive and envenomed pleasure ; its hollowness disappoints at the time ; its poison cruelly tortures afterward ; its effects deprave forever.

If a wife's nature loathes that of the man she is wedded to, marriage must be slavery. Against slavery all right thinkers revolt, and though torture be the price of resistance, torture must be dared ; though the only road to freedom lie through the gates of death, those gates must be passed ; for freedom is indispensable.

Silence is of different kinds, and breathes different meanings ; no words could inspire a pleasanter content than did M. Paul's wordless presence.

I *do* believe there are some human beings so born, so reared, so guided from a soft cradle to a calm and late grave, that no

excessive suffering penetrates their lot, and no tempestuous blackness overcasts their journey. And often these are not pampered, selfish beings, but Nature's elect, harmonious and benign ; men and women mild with charity, kind agents of God's kind attributes. .

There is in lovers a certain infatuation of egotism ; they will have a witness of their happiness, cost that witness what it may.

Pedigree, social position, and recondite intellectual acquisition, occupied about the same space and place in my interests and thoughts ; they were my third-class lodgers, to whom could be assigned only the small sitting-room and the little back bedroom. Even if the dining- and drawing-rooms stood empty, I never confessed it to them, as thinking minor accommodations better suited to their circumstances. The world, I soon learned, held a different estimate ; and I make no doubt the world is very right in its view, yet believe also that I am not quite wrong in mine.

A calm day had settled into a crystalline evening. The world wore a North Pole coloring. All its lights and tints looked like the “reflets” of white, or violet, or pale-green gems. The hills wore a lilac blue ; the setting sun had purple in its red ; thy sky was ice, all silvered azure ; when the stars rose, they were of white crystal—not gold ; gray, or cerulean, or faint emerald hues—cool, pure, and transparent—tinged the mass of the landscape.

Man is ever clogged with his mortality, and it was my mortal nature which now pattered and plained ; my nerves

which jarred and gave a false sound, because the soul, of late rushing headlong to an aim, had overstrained the body's comparative weakness. A horror of great darkness fell upon me ; I felt my chamber invaded by one I had known formerly, but had thought forever departed. I was temporarily a prey to hypochondria. She had been my acquaintance, nay, my guest once before in boyhood ; I had entertained her at bed and board for a year ; for that space of time I had her to myself in a secret ; she lay with me ; she ate with me ; she walked out with me, showing me nooks in woods, hollows in hills, where we could sit together, and where she could droop her drear veil over me, and so hide sky and sun, grass and green tree ; taking me entirely to her death-cold bosom and holding me with arms of bone. What tales she would tell me at such hours ! What songs she would recite in my ears ! How she would discourse to me of her own country—the grave—and again and again promise to conduct me there ere long ; and drawing me to the very brink of a black, sullen river, show me on the other side shores unequal with mound, monument, and tablet, standing up in a glimmer more hoary than moonlight. “Necropolis !” she would whisper, pointing to the pale piles, and add, “it contains a mansion prepared for you.” But my boyhood was lonely, parentless, uncheered by brother or sister ; and there was no marvel that, just as I rose to youth, a sorceress, finding me lost in vague mental wanderings, with many affections and few objects, glowing aspirations and gloomy prospects, strong desires and tender hopes, should lift up her illusive lamp to me in the distance. and lure me to her vaulted home of horrors.

## REASON.

This hag, this Reason, would not let me look up, or smile, or hope ; she could not rest unless I were altogether crushed, cowed, broken-in, and broken down. According to her I was born only to work for a piece of bread, to await the pains of death, and steadily through all life to despond. Reason might be right ; yet no wonder we are glad at times to defy her, to rush from under her rod and give a truant hour to Imagination —*her* soft, bright foe, *our* sweet Help, our divine Hope. We shall and must break bounds at intervals, despite the terrible revenge that awaits our return. Reason is vindictive as a devil ; for me she was always envenomed as a stepmother. If I have obeyed her, it has chiefly been with the obedience of fear, not of love. Long ago I should have died of her ill-usage ; her stint, her chill, her barren board, her icy bed, her savage, ceaseless blows ; but for that kinder Power who holds my secret and sworn allegiance. Often has Reason turned me out by night, in mid-winter, on cold snow, flinging for sustenance the gnawed bone dogs had forsaken ; sternly has she vowed her stores held nothing more for me—harshly denied my right to ask better things. . . . Then, looking up, have I seen in the sky a head amid circling stars, of which the midmost and the brightest lent a ray sympathetic and attent. A spirit, softer and better than Human Reason has descended with quiet flight to the waste—bringing all round her a sphere of air borrowed of eternal summer ; bringing perfume of flowers which cannot fade—fragrance of trees whose fruit is life ; bringing breezes pure from a world whose day needs no sun to lighten it. My hunger has this good angel appeased with food, sweet and strange, gathered among

gleaning angels, garnering their dew-white harvest in the first fresh hour of a heavenly day ; tenderly has she assuaged the insufferable tears which weep away life itself—kindly given rest to deadly weariness—generously lent hope and impulse to paralyzed despair. Divine, compassionate, succorable influence ! When I bend the knee to other than God, it shall be at thy white and winged feet, beautiful on mountain or on plain. Temples have been reared to the Sun—altars dedicated to the Moon. Oh, greater glory ! To thee neither hands build nor lips consecrate ; but hearts, through ages, are faithful to thy worship. A dwelling thou hast, too wide for walls, too high for dome—a temple whose floors are space—rites whose mysteries transpire in presence, to the kindling, the harmony of worlds !

To “ sit in sunshine calm and sweet” is said to be excellent for weak people ; it gives them vital force.

There are human tempers, bland, glowing, and genial, within whose influence it is as good for the poor in spirit to live, as it is for the feeble in frame to bask in the glow of noon.

These struggles with the natural character, the strong native bent of the heart, may seem futile and fruitless, but in the end they do good. They tend, however slightly, to give the actions, the conduct, that turn which Reason approves, and which Feeling, perhaps, too often opposes. They certainly make a difference in the general tenor of a life, and enable it to be better regulated, more equable, quieter on the surface ; and it is on the surface only the common gaze will fall. As to what lies below, leave that with God. Man, your equal, weak as you, and not fit to be your judge, may be shut out

thence. Take it to your Maker ; show Him the secrets of the spirit He gave ; ask Him how you are to bear the pains He has appointed ; kneel in His presence, and pray with faith for light in darkness, for strength in piteous weakness, for patience in extreme need. Certainly, at some hour, though perhaps not *your* hour, the waiting waters will stir ; in *some* shape, though perhaps not the shape you dreamed, which your heart loved, and for which it bled, the healing herald will descend, the cripple, and the blind, and the dumb, and the possessed will be led to bathe. Herald, come quickly ! Thousands lie round the pool, weeping and despairing, to see it, through slow years, stagnant. Long are the “times” of heaven. The orbits of angel messengers seem wide to mortal vision : they may enring ages. The cycle of one departure and return may clasp unnumbered generations ; and dust, kindling to brief suffering life, and through pain, passing back to dust, may meanwhile perish out of memory again, and yet again. To how many maimed and mourning millions is the first and sole angel visitant, him Easterns call Azrael !

The short winter day, as I perceived from the far-declined sun, was already approaching its close ; a chill frost-mist was rising from the river on which X—— stands, and along whose banks the road I had taken lay ; it dimmed the earth, but did not obscure the clear, icy blue of the January sky. There was a great stillness near and far ; the time of the day favored tranquillity, as the people were all employed within doors, the hour of evening release from the factories not being yet arrived ; a sound of full-flowing water alone pervaded the air, for the river was deep and abundant, swelled by the melting of a late snow. I stood awhile leaning over a wall, and, looking down at the

current, I watched the rapid rush of its waves. I desired memory to take a clear and permanent impression of the scene, and treasure it for future years. Grovetown church clock struck four. Looking up, I beheld the last of that day's sun glinting red through the leafless boughs of some very old oak trees surrounding the church : its light colored and characterized the picture as I wished. I paused yet a moment till the sweet, low sound of the bell had quite died out of the air ; then ear, eye, and feeling satisfied, I quitted the wall, and once more turned my face toward X——.

Where my soul went during that swoon I cannot tell. Whatever she saw, or wherever she travelled in her trance on that strange night, she kept her own secret, never whispering a word to Memory, and baffling imagination by an indissoluble silence. She may have gone upward, and come in sight of her eternal home, hoping for leave to rest now, and deeming that her painful union with matter was at last dissolved. While she so deemed, an angel may have warned her away from heaven's threshold, and, guiding her weeping down, have bound her once more, all shuddering and unwilling, to that poor frame, cold and wasted, of whose companionship she was grown more than weary.

How often, while women and girls sit warm at sung firesides, their hearts and imaginations are doomed to divorce from the comfort surrounding their persons, forced out by night to wander through dark ways, to dare stress of weather, to contend with the snow-blast, to wait at lonely gates and stiles in wildest storms, watching and listening to see and hear the father, the son, the husband coming home.

There are people whom a lowered position degrades morally, to whom loss of connection costs loss of self-respect : are not these justified in placing the highest value on that station and association which is their safeguard from debasement ? If a man feels that he would become contemptible in his own eyes were it generally known that his ancestry were simple and not gentle, poor and not rich, workers and not capitalists, would it be right severely to blame him for keeping these fatal facts out of sight—for starting, trembling, quailing at the chance which threatens exposure ? The longer we live the more our experience widens ; the less prone are we to judge our neighbor's conduct, to question the world's wisdom ; whenever an accumulation of small defences is found, whether surrounding the prude's virtue or the man of the world's respectability, there, be sure, it is needed.

Those who live in retirement, whose lives have fallen amid the seclusion of schools or of other walled-in and guarded dwellings, are liable to be suddenly and for a long while dropped out of the memory of their friends, the denizens of a freer world ! Unaccountably, perhaps, and close upon some space of unusually frequent intercourse—some congeries of rather exciting little circumstances, whose natural sequel would rather seem to be the quickening than the suspension of communication—there falls a stilly pause, a wordless silence, a long blank of oblivion. Unbroken always is this blank ; alike entire and unexplained. The letter, the message once frequent, are cut off ; the visit, formerly periodical, ceases to occur ; the book, paper, or other token that indicated remembrance, comes no more.

Always there are excellent reasons for these lapses, if the

hermit but knew them. Though he is stagnant in his cell, his connections without are whirling in the very vortex of life. That void interval which passes for him so slowly that the very clocks seem at a stand, and the wingless hours plod by in the likeness of tired tramps prone to rest at milestones—that same interval, perhaps, teems with events, and pants with hurry for his friends.

The hermit—if he be a sensible hermit—will swallow his own thoughts, and lock up his own emotions during these weeks of inward winter. He will know that Destiny designed him to imitate, on occasion, the dormouse, and he will be comfortable ; make a tidy ball of himself, creep into a hole of life's wall, and submit decently to the drift which blows in and soon blocks him up, preserving him in ice for the season.

Ah ! when imagination once runs riot, where do we stop ? What winter tree so bare and branchless—what wayside, hedge-munching animal so humble, that Fancy, a passing cloud, and a struggling moonbeam, will not clothe it in spirituality, and make of it a phantom ?

There are certain things in which we so rarely meet with our double that it seems a miracle when that chance befalls.

For a little while, the blooming semblance of beauty may flourish round weakness, but it cannot bear a blast ; it soon fades, even in serenest sunshine.

I have ever felt most burdensome that sort of sensibility which bends of its own will, a giant slave under the sway of good sense.

We walked back to the Rue Fossette by moonlight—such moonlight as fell on Eden—shining through the shades of the Great Garden, and haply gilding a path glorious for a step divine—a Presence nameless. Once in their lives some men and women go back to these first fresh days of our great sire and mother—taste that grand morning's dew—bathe in its sunrise.

Faithful women err in this, that they think themselves the sole faithful of God's creatures.

No mockery in this world ever sounds to me so hollow as that of being told to *cultivate* happiness. What does such advice mean? Happiness is not a potato, to be planted in mould and tilled with manure. Happiness is a glory shining far down upon us out of heaven. She is a divine dew which the soul, on certain of its summer mornings, feels gently dropping upon it from the amaranth bloom and golden fruitage of Paradise.

If there are words and wrongs like knives, whose deep-inflicted lacerations never heal—cutting injuries and insults of serrated and poison-dripping edge—so, too there are consolations of tone too fine for the ear not fondly and forever to retain their echo : caressing kindnesses—loved, lingered over through a whole life, recalled with unfaded tenderness, and answering the call with undimmed shine, out of that raven cloud foreshadowing Death himself.

Where, indeed, does the moon not look well? What is the scene, confined or expansive, which her orb does not hallow?

Rosy or fiery, she mounted now above a not distant bank ; even while we watched her flushed ascent, she cleared to gold, and in very brief space floated up stainless into a now calm sky.

Our natures own predilections and antipathies alike strange. There are people from whom we secretly shrink, whom we would personally avoid, though reason confesses that they are good people. There are others with faults of temper, etc., evident enough, beside whom we live content, as if the air about them did us good.

No man—no woman, is always strong, always able to bear up against the unjust opinion—the vilifying word. Calumny, even from the mouth of a fool, will sometimes cut into unguarded feelings.

I believe—I daily find it proved—that we can get nothing in this world worth keeping, not so much as a principle or a conviction, except out of purifying flame, or through strengthening peril. We err ; we fall ; we are humbled—then we walk more carefully. We greedily eat and drink poison out of the gilded cup of vice, or from the beggar's wallet of avarice ; we are sickened, degraded ; everything good in us rebels against us ; our souls rise bitterly indignant against our bodies ; there is a period of civil war ; if the soul has strength, it conquers and rules thereafter.

Not always do those who dare such divine conflict prevail. Night after night the sweat of agony may burst dark on the forehead ; the suppliant may cry for mercy with that soundless voice the soul utters when its appeal is to the Invisible.

" Spare my beloved," it may implore. " Heal my life's life. Rend not from me what long affection entwines with my whole nature. God of heaven, bend—hear—be clement!" And after this cry and strife, the sun may rise and see him worsted. That opening morn, which used to salute him with the whisper of zephyrs, the carol of skylarks, may breathe, as its first accents, from the dear lips which color and heat have quitted, " Oh, I have had a suffering night. This morning I am worse. I have tried to rise. I cannot. Dreams I am unused to have troubled me."

Then the watcher approaches the patient's pillow, and sees a new and strange moulding of the familiar features, feels at once that the insufferable moment draws nigh, knows that it is God's will that his idol shall be broken, and bends his head, and subdues his soul to the sentence he cannot avert, and scarce can bear.

This is an autumn evening, wet and wild. There is only one cloud in the sky, but it curtains it from pole to pole. The wind cannot rest ; it hurries sobbing over hills of sullen outline, colorless with twilight and mist. Rain has beat all day on that church tower. It rises dark from the stony inclosure of its graveyard. The nettles, the long grass, and the tombs, all drip with wet. This evening reminds me too forcibly of another evening some years ago—a howling, rainy autumn evening, too, when certain persons who had that day performed a pilgrimage to a new-made grave in a heretic cemetery sat near a wood-fire on the hearth of a foreign dwelling. They were merry and social, but they each knew that a gap, never to be filled, had been made in their circle. They knew they had lost something whose absence could never be quite atoned for so

long as they lived ; and they knew that heavy-falling rain was soaking into the wet earth which covered their lost darling, and that the sad, sighing gale was mourning above her buried head. The fire warmed them ; life and friendship yet blessed them ; but Jessie lay cold, coffined, solitary, only the sod screening her from the storm.

The true poet, quiet externally though he may be, has often a truculent spirit under his placidity, and is full of shrewdness in his meekness, and can measure the whole stature of those who look down on him, and correctly ascertain the weight and value of the pursuit they disdain him for not having followed. It is happy that he can have his own bliss, his own society with his great friend and goddess, nature, quite independent of those who find little pleasure in him, and in whom he finds no pleasure at all. It is just that while the world and circumstances often turn a dark, cold side to him—and properly, too, because he first turns a dark, cold, careless side to them—he should be able to maintain a festal brightness and cherishing glow in his bosom, which makes all bright and genial for him ; while strangers, perhaps, deem his existence a Polar winter never gladdened by a sun. The true poet is not one whit to be pitied ; and he is apt to laugh in his sleeve when any misguided sympathizer whines over his wrongs. Even when utilitarians sit in judgment on him, and pronounce him and his art useless, he hears the sentence with such a hard derision, such a broad, deep, comprehensive and merciless contempt of the unhappy Pharisees who pronounce it, that he is rather to be chidden than condoled with.

After all, the British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered, most self-respecting of any in Europe.

It is a fine thing, reader, to be lifted in a moment from indigence to wealth—a very fine thing ; but not a matter one can comprehend, or consequently enjoy, all at once. And then there are other chances in life far more thrilling and rapture-giving ; *this* is solid, an affair of the actual world, nothing ideal about it ; all its associations are solid and sober, and its manifestations are the same. One does not jump, and spring, and shout hurrah ! at hearing one has got a fortune ; one begins to consider responsibilities and to ponder business ; on a base of steady satisfaction rise certain grave cares—and we contain ourselves, and brood over our bliss with a solemn brow.

A splendid midsummer shone over England ; skies so pure, suns so radiant as were then seen in long succession, seldom favor, even singly, our wave-girt land. It was as if a band of Italian days had come from the South, like a flock of glorious passenger-birds, and lighted to rest them on the cliffs of Albion. The hay was all got in ; the fields around Thornfield were green and shorn ; the roads white and baked ; the trees were in their dark prime ; hedge and wood, full-leaved and deeply-tinted, contrasted well with the sunny hue of the cleared meadows between.

It is a happy thing that time quells the longings of vengeance, and hushes the promptings of rage and aversion : I had left this woman in bitterness and hate, and I came back to her now with no other emotion than a sort of ruth for her great sufferings, and a strong yearning to forget and forgive all injuries—to be reconciled, and clasp hands in amity.

All men of talent, whether they be men of feeling or not ; whether they be zealots, or aspirants, or despots—provided

only they be sincere—have their sublime moments ; when they subdue and rule.

If men could see us as we really are, they would be a little amazed ; but the cleverest, the acutest men are often under an illusion about women ; they do not read them in a true light ; they misapprehend them, both for good and evil : their good woman is a queer thing, half doll, half angel ; their bad woman almost always a fiend. Then to hear them fall into ecstasies with each other's creations, worshipping the heroine of such a poem—novel—drama, thinking it fine—divine ! Fine and divine it may be, but often quite artificial—false as the rose in my best bonnet there. If I spoke all I think on this point ; if I gave my real opinion of some first-rate female characters in first-rate works, where should I be ? Dead under a cairn of avenging stones in half an hour.

Yorkshire has such families here and there among her hills and wolds—peculiar, racy, vigorous ; of good blood and strong brain ; turbulent somewhat in the pride of their strength, and intractable in the force of their native powers ; wanting polish, wanting consideration, wanting docility, but sound, spirited, and true-bred as the eagle on the cliff or the steed in the steppe.

It flashes on me at this moment how sisters feel toward each other. Affection twined with their life, which no shocks of feeling can uproot, which little quarrels only trample an instant that it may spring more freshly when the pressure is removed ; affection that no passion can ultimately outrival, with which even love itself cannot do more than compete in force and truth. Love hurts us so : it is so tormenting, so racking, and

it burns away our strength with its flame ; in affection is no pain and no fire, only sustenance and balm.

That British love of decency will work miracles. The poverty which reduces an Irish girl to rags is impotent to rob the English girl of the neat wardrobe she knows necessary to her self-respect.

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Mother, the Lord who gave each of us our talents will come home some day, and will demand from all an account. The teapot, the old stocking-foot, the linen rag, the willow-pattern tureen, will yield up their barren deposit in many a house. Suffer your daughters at least to put their money to the exchangers, that they may be enabled at the Master's coming to pay him his own with usury.

The future sometimes seems to sob a low warning of the events it is bringing us, like some gathering though yet remote storm, which, in tones of the wind, in flushings of the firmament, in clouds strangely torn, announces a blast strong to strew the sea with wrecks : or commissioned to bring in fog the yellow taint of pestilence, covering white Western isles with the poisoned exhalations of the East, dimming the lattices of English homes with the breath of Indian plague. At other times, this future bursts suddenly, as if a rock had rent, and in it a grave had opened, whence issues the body of one that slept. Ere you are aware, you stand face to face with a shrouded and unthought-of calamity—a new Lazarus.

Most people have had a period or periods in their lives when they have felt thus forsaken ; when, having long hoped

against hope, and still seen the day of fruition deferred, their hearts have truly sickened within them. This is a terrible hour, but it is often that darkest point which precedes the rise of day ; that turn of the year when the icy January wind carries over the waste at once the dirge of departing winter and the prophecy of coming spring. The perishing birds, however, cannot thus understand the blast before which they shiver ; and as little can the suffering soul recognize, in the climax of its affliction, the dawn of its deliverance. Yet let whoever grieves still cling fast to love and faith in God : God will never deceive, never finally desert him. “ Whom he loveth, he chasteneth.” These words are true, and should not be forgotten.

“ I saw kneeling on those hills—I now see—a woman-Titan ; her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath, where yonder flock is grazing ; a veil, white as an avalanche, sweeps from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightning flame on its borders. Under her breast I see her zone, purple like that horizon ; through its blush shines the star of evening. Her steady eyes I cannot picture ; they are clear—they are deep as lakes—they are lifted and full of worship—they tremble with the softness of love and the lustre of prayer. Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early moon, risen long before dark gathers ; she reclines her bosom on the ridge of Stilbro’ Moor ; her mighty hands are joined beneath it. So kneeling, face to face she speaks with God. That Eve is Jehovah’s daughter, as Adam was his son.”

“ She is very vague and visionary ! Come, Shirley, we ought to go into church.”

"Caroline, I will not : I will stay out here with my mother Eve, in these days called Nature. I love her—undying, mighty being ! Heaven may have faded from her brow when she fell in Paradise ; but all that is glorious on earth shines there still. She is taking me to her bosom, and showing me her heart. Hush, Caroline ! you will see her and feel as I do, if we are both silent."

It was now the sweetest hour of the twenty-four. "Day its fervid fires had wasted," and dew fell cool on panting plain and scorched summit. Where the sun had gone down in simple state—pure of the pomp of clouds—spread a solemn purple, burning with the light of red jewel and furnace flame at one point, on one hill-peak, and extending high and wide, soft and still softer, over half heaven. The east had its own charm of fine, deep blue, and its own modest gem, a rising and solitary star ; soon it will coast the moon, but she was yet beneath the horizon.

I walked awhile on the pavement, but a subtile, well-known scent—that of a cigar—stole from some window ; I saw the library casement open a hand-breadth ; I knew I might be watched thence, so I went in the orchard. No nook in the grounds more sheltered and more Eden-like : it was full of trees, it bloomed with flowers ; a very high wall shut it out from the court, on one side ; on the other, a beech avenue screened it from the lawn. At the bottom was a sunk fence, its sole separation from lonely fields : a winding walk, bordered with laurels and terminating in a giant chestnut, circled at the base by a seat, led down to the fence. Here one could wander unseen. While such honey-dew fell, such silence reigned, such gloaming gathered, I felt as if I could haunt

such shade forever : but in threading such flower and fruit parterres at the upper part of the inclosure, enticed there by the light the now rising moon casts on this more open quarter, my step is stayed—not by sound, not by sight, but once more by a warning fragrance.

Sweetbrier and southernwood, jasmine, pink, and rose have long been yielding their evening sacrifice of incense : this new scent is neither of shrub nor flower · it is—I know it well—it is Mr. Rochester's cigar !

Nothing irks me like the idea of being a burden and a bore —an inevitable burden—a ceaseless bore !

Nothing ever charms me more than when I meet my superior—one who makes me sincerely feel that he is my superior.

Often had she gone up the Hollow with him after sunset, to scent the freshness of the earth, where a growth of fragrant herbage carpeted a certain narrow terrace, edging a deep ravine, from whose rifted gloom was heard a sound like the spirit of the lonely watercourse, moaning among its wet stones, and between its weedy banks, and under its dark bower of alders.

However old, plain, humble, desolate, afflicted we may be, so long as our hearts preserve the feeblest spark of life, they preserve also, shivering near that pale ember, a starved, ghostly longing for appreciation and affection. To this extenuated spectre, perhaps, a crumb is not thrown once a year ; but when ahungered and athirst to famine—when all humanity has

forgotten the dying tenant of a decaying house—Divine Mercy remembers the mourner, and a shower of manna falls for lips that earthly nutriment is to pass no more. Biblical promises, heard first in health, but then unheeded, come whispering to the couch of sickness ; it is felt that a pitying God watches what all mankind have forsaken ; the tender compassion of Jesus is recalled and relied on ; the faded eye, gazing beyond Time, sees a Home, a Friend, a Refuge in Eternity

“ What was I created for, I wonder ? Where is my place in the world ? ”

She mused again.

“ Ah ! I see,” she pursued presently ; “ that is the question which most old maids are puzzled to solve ; other people solve it for them by saying, ‘ Your place is to do good to others, to be helpful whenever help is wanted.’ That is right in some measure, and a very convenient doctrine for the people who hold it ; but I perceive that certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service, and then they requite them by praise ; they call them devoted and virtuous. Is this enough ? Is it to live ? Is there not a terrible hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given away to others, for want of something of your own to bestow it on ? I suspect there is. Does virtue lie in abnegation of self ? I do not believe it. Undue humility makes tyranny ; weak concession creates selfishness. . . .

“ Each human being has his share of rights. I suspect it would conduce to the happiness and welfare of all if each knew his allotment, and held to it as tenaciously as the martyr to

his creed. Queer thoughts these, that surge in my mind ; are they right thoughts ? I am not certain.

“The utmost which ought to be required of old maids, in the way of appearance, is that they should not absolutely offend men’s eyes as they pass them in the street ; for the rest they should be allowed, without too much scorn, to be as absorbed, grave, plain-looking, and plain-dressed as they please.”

Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity or registering wrongs. We are, and must be, one and all, burdened with faults in this world : but the time will soon come when, I trust, we shall put them off in putting off our corruptible bodies ; when debasement and sin will fall from us with this cumbrous frame of flesh, and only the spark of the spirit will remain, the impalpable principle of life and thought, pure as when it left the Creator to inspire the creature : whence it came it will return—perhaps again to be communicated to some being higher than man—perhaps to pass through gradations of glory, from the pale human soul to brighten to the seraph ! Surely it will never, on the contrary, be suffered to degenerate from man to fiend ! No ; I cannot believe that ; I hold another creed, which no one ever taught me, and which I seldom mention, but in which I delight, and to which I cling ; for it extends hope to all : it makes Eternity a rest—a mighty home, not a terror and abyss. Besides, with this creed, I can so closely distinguish between the criminal and his crime ; I can so sincerely forgive the first while I abhor the last : with this creed, revenge never worries my heart, degradation never too deeply disgusts me, injustice never crushes me too low. I live in calm, looking to the end.

“ We forget Nature, imprimis.”

“ And then Nature forgets us ; covers her vast calm brow with a dim veil, conceals her face, and withdraws the peaceful joy with which, if we had been content to worship her only, she would have filled our hearts.”

“ What does she give us instead ?”

“ More elation and more anxiety : an excitement that steals the hours away fast, and a trouble that ruffles their course.”

Commonplace young ladies can be quite as hard as commonplace young gentlemen—quite as worldly and selfish. Those who suffer should always avoid them ; grief and calamity they despise : they seem to regard them as judgments of God on the lowly. With them, to “ love ” is merely to contrive a scheme for achieving a good match ; to be “ disappointed ” is to have their scheme seen through and frustrated. They think the feelings and projects of others on the subject of love similar to their own, and judge them accordingly.

Men and women are so different ; they are in such a different position. Women have so few things to think about—men so many ; you may have a friendship for a man, while he is almost indifferent to you. Much of what cheers your life may be dependent on him, while not a feeling or interest of moment in his eyes may have reference to you.

Love is real : the most real, the most lasting—the sweetest and yet the bitterest thing we know.

It is vulgar and puerile to confound generals with particulars ; in every case there is the rule, and there are the exceptions.

Sincerity is never ludicrous ; it is always respectable. Whether truth—be it religious or moral truth—speak eloquently and in well-chosen language or not, its voice should be heard with reverence. Let those who cannot nicely and with certainty discern the difference between the tones of hypocrisy and those of sincerity, never presume to laugh at all, lest they should have the miserable misfortune to laugh in the wrong place, and commit impiety when they think they are achieving wit.

Eleemosynary relief never yet tranquillized the working-classes—it never made them grateful ; it is not in human nature that it should. I suppose were all things ordered aright, they ought not to be in a position to need that humiliating relief ; and this they feel : we should feel it were we so placed.

For those who are not hungry, it is easy to palaver about the degradation of charity, and so on ; but they forget the brevity of life, as well as its bitterness. We have none of us long to live ; let us help each other through seasons of want and woe as well as we can, without heeding in the least the scruples of vain philosophy.

The black frost reigned, unbroken by sun or breeze through the grounds. I covered my head and arms with the skirt of my frock, and went out to walk in a part of the plantation which was quite sequestered ; but I found no pleasure in the silent trees, the fallen fir-cones, the congealed relics of autumn, russet leaves, swept by past winds in heaps, and now stiffened together. I leaned against a gate, and looked into an empty field where no sheep were feeding, where the short grass was

nipped and blanched. It was a very gray day ; a most opaque sky, “onding on snaw,” canopied all ; thence flakes fell at intervals, which settled on the hard path and on the hoary lea without melting. I stood a wretched child enough, whispering to myself over and over again, “What shall I do ? what shall I do ?”

It is a very strange sensation to inexperienced youth to feel itself quite alone in the world ; cut adrift from every connection, uncertain whether the port to which it is bound can be reached, and prevented by many impediments from returning to that it has quitted.

Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits ; that world is round us, for it is everywhere ; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us ; and if we were dying in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognize our innocence (if innocent we be, as I know you are of this charge which Mr. Brocklehurst has weakly and pompously repeated at second-hand from Mrs. Reed ; for I read a sincere nature in your ardent eyes and on your clear front), and God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness—to glory ?

Men rarely like such of their fellows as read their inward nature too clearly and truly. It is good for women, especially, to be endowed with a soft blindness ; to have mild, dim eyes,

that never penetrate below the surface of things—that take all for what it seems ; thousands, knowing this, keep their eyelids dropped, on system ; but the most downcast glance has its loophole, through which it can, on occasion, take its sentinel-survey of life. I remember once seeing a pair of blue eyes, that were usually thought sleepy, secretly on the alert, and I knew by their expression—an expression which chilled my blood, it was in that quarter so wondrously unexpected—that for years they had been accustomed to silent soul-reading. The world called the owner of these blue eyes “*bonne petite femme*” (she was not an Englishwoman); I learned her nature afterward—got it off by heart—studied it in its farthest, most hidden recesses—she was the finest, deepest, subtlest schemer in Europe.

I know no medium ; I never in my life have known any medium in my dealings with positive hard characters, antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt. I have always faithfully observed the one, up to the very moment of bursting, sometimes with volcanic vehemence, into the other.

A waft of wind came sweeping down the laurel-walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut ; it wandered away—away—away—to an indefinite distance—it died. The nightingale’s song was then the only voice of the hour.

It is vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity : they must have action ; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot.

Nobody knows how many rebellions, besides political rebellions, ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally ; but women feel just as men feel ; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do ; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer ; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

Feeling without judgment is a washy draught indeed ; but judgment untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition.

Obtrusiveness is a crime ; forwardness is a crime ; and both disgust. But love !—no purest angel need blush to love ! When I see or hear either man or woman couple shame with love, I know their minds are coarse, their associations debased. Many who think themselves refined ladies and gentlemen, and on whose lips the word “ vulgarity ” is for ever hovering, cannot mention “ love ” without betraying their own innate and imbecile degradation ; it is a low feeling in their estimation, connected only with low ideas for them.

Children can feel, but they cannot analyze their feelings ; and if the analysis is partly affected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words.

I then sat with my doll on my knee till the fire got low, glancing round occasionally to make sure that nothing worse than myself haunted the shadowy room ; and when the embers sunk to a dull red, I undressed hastily, tugging at knots and strings as I best might, and sought shelter from cold and darkness in my crib. To this crib I always took my doll ; human beings must love something, and in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded, graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow. It puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doted on this wooden toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation. I could not sleep unless it was folded in my night-gown ; and when it lay there safe and warm, I was comparatively happy, believing it happy likewise.

One evening—and I was not delirious ; I was in my sane mind—I got up—I dressed myself, weak and shaking. The solitude and the stillness of the long dormitory could not be borne any longer ; the ghastly white beds were turning into spectres—the coronal of each became a death's head, huge and sun-bleached—dead dreams of an elder world and mightier race lay frozen in their wide gaping eyeholes. That evening more firmly than ever fastened into my soul the conviction that Fate was of stone, and Hope a false idol—blind, bloodless, and of granite core. I felt, too, that the trial God had appointed me was gaining its climax, and must now be turned by my own hands, hot, feeble, trembling as they were. It rained still, and blew ; but with more clemency, I thought, than it had poured and raged all day. Twilight was falling, and I deemed its influence pitiful ; from the lattice I saw coming night-clouds, trailing low like banners drooping. It seemed to me that at

this hour there was affection and sorrow in Heaven above for all pain suffered on earth beneath ; the weight of my dreadful dream became alleviated—that insufferable thought of being no more loved—no more owned, half yielded to hope of the contrary—I was sure this hope would shine clearer if I got out from under this house-roof, which was crushing as the slab of a tomb, and went outside the city to a certain quiet hill, a long way distant in the fields.

\* \* \* \* \*

If the storm had lulled a little at sunset, it made up now for lost time. Strong and horizontal thundered the current of the wind from northwest to southeast ; it brought rain like spray, and sometimes a sharp hail, like shot. It was cold, and pierced me to the vitals. I bent my head to meet it, but it beat me back. My heart did not fail me at all in this conflict ; I only wished that I had wings and could ascend the gale, spread and repose my pinions on its strength, career in its course, sweep where it swept. While wishing this, I suddenly felt colder where before I was cold, and more powerless where before I was weak. I tried to reach the porch of a great building near, but the mass of frontage and the giant spire turned black and vanished from my eyes. Instead of sinking on the steps as I intended, I seemed to pitch headlong down an abyss. I remember no more.

The first woman's breast that heaved with life on this world yielded the daring which could contend with Omnipotence ; the strength which could bear a thousand years of bondage—the vitality which could feed that vulture death through uncounted ages—the unexhausted life and uncorrupted excellence, sister to immortality, which, after millenniums of crimes,

struggles, and woes, could conceive and bring forth a Messiah. The first woman was heaven-born : vast was the heart whence gushed the well-spring of the blood of nations ; and grand the undegenerate head where rested the consort-crown of creation.

If the company of fools irritates, as you say, the society of clever men leaves its own peculiar pain also. Where the goodness or talent of your friend is beyond and above all doubt, your own unworthiness to be his associate often becomes a matter of question.

The world can understand well enough the process of perishing for want of food ; perhaps few persons can enter into or follow out that of going mad from solitary confinement. They see the long-buried prisoner disinterred, a maniac or an idiot !—how his senses left him—how his nerves, first inflamed, underwent nameless agony, and then sunk to palsy—is a subject too intricate for examination, too abstract for popular comprehension. Speak of it ! you might as well stand up in an European market-place, and propound dark sayings in that language and mood wherein Nebuchadnezzar, the imperial hypochondriac, communed with his baffled Chaldeans.

Men, and women too, must have delusion of some sort ; if not made ready to their hand, they will invent exaggeration for themselves.

Life is so constructed that the event does not, cannot, will not, match the expectation.

There is no excellent beauty, no accomplished grace, no reliable refinement, without strength as excellent, as complete,

as trusthworthy. As well might you look for good fruit and blossom on a rootless and sapless treee, as for charms that will endure in a feeble and relaxed nature. For a little while, the blooming semblance of beauty may flourish round weakness ; but it cannot bear a blast ; it soon fades, even in serenest sunshine.

Where, indeed, does the moon not look well ? What is the scene, confined or expansive, which her orb does not hallow ? Rosy or fiery, she mounted now above a not distant bank ; even while we watched her flushed ascent, she cleared to gold, and in a very brief space, floated up stainless into a now calm sky.

Some real lives do—for some certain days or years—actually anticipate the happiness of heaven ; and I believe, if such perfect happiness is once felt by good people (to the wicked it never comes), its sweet effect is never wholly lost. Whatever trials follow, whatever pains of sickness or shades of death, the glory precedent still shines through, cheering the keen anguish, and tinging the deep cloud.

The multitude have something else to do than to read hearts and interpret dark sayings. Who wills, may keep his own counsel—be his own secret's sovereign.

How seem in the eyes of that God who made all firmaments, from whose nostrils issue whatever of life is here, or in the stars shining yonder—how seem the differences of man ? But as time is not for God, nor space, so neither is measure nor comparison. We abase ourselves in our littleness, and we do

right ; yet it may be that the constancy of one heart, the truth and faith of one mind, according to the light He has appointed, impart as much to Him as the just motion of the satellites about their planets, of planets about their suns, of suns around that mighty unseen centre incomprehensible, irrealisable, with strange mental effort only divine.

Happy hour—stay one moment ! droop those plumes, rest those wings ; incline to mine that brow of heaven ! White Angel ! let thy light linger ; leave its reflection on succeeding clouds ; bequeath its cheer to that time which needs a ray in retrospect.

#### THE CLOSE OF “VILLETTE.”

The sun passes the equinox ; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere ; but—he is coming.

Frosts appear at night ; November has sent his fogs in advance ; the wind takes its autumn moan ; but—he is coming.

The skies hang full and dark—a wreck sails from the west ; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations ; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state ; the heavens are one flame ; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky ; I have noted them ever since childhood. God watch that sail ! Oh, guard it !

The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—“keening” at every window ! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long : wander as I may through the house this

night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong ; by midnight all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild southwest storm.

That storm roared, frenzied, for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks : it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace, be still ! Oh, a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it : till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some !

## POEMS.

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### ROCHESTER'S SONG.

THE truest love that ever heart  
Felt at its kindled core,  
Did through each vein, in quickened start,  
The tide of being pour.

Her coming was my hope each day,  
Her parting was my pain ;  
The chance that did her steps delay  
Was ice in every vein.

I dreamed it would be nameless bliss,  
As I loved, loved to be ;  
And to this object did I press  
As blind as eagerly.

But wide as pathless was the space  
That lay, our lives, between,  
And dangerous as the foamy race  
Of ocean-surges green.

And haunted as a robber-path  
Through wilderness of wood,  
For Might and Right, and Woe and Wrath  
Between our spirits stood.

I dangers dared ; I hind'rance scorned ;  
I omens did defy ;  
Whatever menaced, harassed, warned,  
I passed impetuous by.

On sped my rainbow, fast as light ;  
I flew as in a dream ;  
For glorious rose upon my sight  
That child of Shower and Gleam.

Still bright on clouds of suffering dim  
Shines that soft, solemn joy ;  
Nor care I now how dense and grim  
Disasters gather nigh :

I care not in this moment sweet,  
Though all I have rushed o'er  
Should come on pinion, strong and fleet,  
Proclaiming vengeance sore :

Though haughty hate should strike me down,  
Right, bar approach to me,  
And grinding Might, with furious frown,  
Swear endless enmity,

My love has placed her little hand  
With noble faith in mine,  
And vowed that wedlock's sacred band  
Our natures shall entwine.

My love has sworn, with sealing kiss,  
With me to live—to die ;  
I have at last my nameless bliss :  
As I love—loved am I !

### EVENING SOLACE.

THE human heart has hidden treasures,  
In secret kept, in silence sealed ;—  
The thoughts, the hopes, the dreams, the pleasures,  
Whose charms were broken if revealed.  
And days may pass in gay confusion,  
And nights in rosy riot fly,  
While, lost in Fame's or Wealth's illusion,  
The memory of the Past may die.

But there are hours of lonely musing,  
Such as in evening silence come,  
When, soft as birds their pinions closing,  
The heart's best feelings gather home.  
Then in our souls there seems to languish  
A tender grief that is not woe ;  
And thoughts that once wrung groans of anguish,  
Now cause but some mild tears to flow.

And feelings, once as strong as passions,  
 Float softly back—a faded dream ;  
 Our own sharp griefs and wild sensations,  
 The tale of others' sufferings seem.  
 Oh ! when the heart is freshly bleeding,  
 How longs it for that time to be,  
 When, through the mist of years receding,  
 Its woes but live in reverie !

And it can dwell on moonlight glimmer,  
 On evening shade and loneliness ;  
 And, while the sky grows dim and dimmer,  
 Feel no untold and strange distress—  
 Only a deeper impulse given  
 By lonely hour and darkened room,  
 To solemn thoughts that soar to heaven,  
 Seeking a life and a world to come.

### REGRET.

LONG ago I wished to leave  
 “The house where I was born ;”  
 Long ago I used to grieve,  
 My home seemed so forlorn.  
 In other years, its silent rooms  
 Were filled with haunting fears ;  
 Now, their very memory comes  
 O'ercharged with tender tears.

Life and marriage I have known,  
Things once deemed so bright,  
Now how utterly is flown  
    Every ray of light !  
'Mid the unknown sea of life  
    I no blest isle have found ;  
At last, through all its wild waves' strife,  
    My bark is homeward bound.

Farewell, dark and rolling deep !  
    Farewell, foreign shore !  
Open, in unclouded sweep,  
    Thy glorious realm before !  
Yet though I had safely passed  
    That weary, vexed main,  
One loved voice, through surge and blast,  
    Could call me back again.

Though the soul's bright morning rose  
    O'er Paradise for me,  
William, even from Heaven's repose  
    I'd turn, invoked by thee !  
Storm nor surge should e'er arrest  
    My soul, exulting then :  
All my heaven was once thy breast,  
    Would it were mine again !

## LIFE.

LIFE, believe, is not a dream,  
So dark as sages say ;  
Oft a little morning rain  
Foretells a pleasant day :  
Sometimes there are clouds of gloom,  
But these are transient all ;  
If the shower will make the roses bloom,  
Oh, why lament its fall ?  
Rapidly, merrily,  
Life's sunny hours flit by ;  
Gratefully, cheerily,  
Enjoy them as they fly.

What though death at times steps in,  
And calls our Best away ?  
What though sorrow seems to win  
O'er Hope a heavy sway ?  
Yet Hope again elastic springs  
Unconquered though she fell ;  
Still buoyant are her golden wings,  
Still strong to bear us well.  
Manfully, fearlessly,  
The day of trial bear,  
For gloriously, victoriously,  
Can courage quell despair.

[From Poem entitled "PREFERENCE."]

MAN of conscience—man of reason ;  
Stern, perchance, but ever just ;  
For to falsehood, wrong, and treason,  
    Honor's shield, and virtue's trust !  
Worker, thinker, firm defender  
    Of Heaven's truth—man's liberty ;  
Soul of iron—proof to slander  
    Rock where founders tyranny.

Fame he seeks not—but full surely  
    She will seek him, in his home ;  
This I know, and wait securely  
    For the atoning hour to come.  
To that man my faith is given,  
    Therefore, soldier, cease to sue ;  
While God reigns in earth and heaven,  
    I to him will still be true !

[From Poem entitled "PARTING."]

In the evening when we're sitting  
    By the fire, perchance alone,  
Then shall heart with warm heart meeting  
    Give responsive tone for tone.

We can burst the bonds which chain us,  
    Which cold human hands have wrought,  
And where none shall dare restrain us  
    We can meet again in thought.

So there's no use in weeping,  
Bear a cheerful spirit still ;  
Never doubt that Fate is keeping  
Future good for present ill !

## WINTER STORES.

WE take from life one little share,  
And say that this shall be  
A space, redeemed from toil and care,  
From tears and sadness free.

And, haply, Death unstrings his bow,  
And Sorrow stands apart,  
And, for a little while, we know  
The sunshine of the heart.

Existence seems a summer eve,  
Warm, soft, and full of peace ;  
Our free, unfettered feelings give  
The soul its full release.

A moment, then, it takes the power  
To call up thoughts that throw  
Around that charmed and hallowed hour,  
This life's divinest glow.

But time, though viewlessly it flies,  
And slowly, will not stay ;  
Alike through clear and clouded skies,  
It cleaves its silent way.

Alike the bitter cup of grief,  
Alike the draught of bliss,  
Its progress leaves but moment brief  
For baffled lips to kiss.

The sparkling draught is dried away,  
The hour of rest is gone,  
And urgent voices, round us, say,  
“ Ho, lingerer, hasten on !”

And has the soul, then, only gained,  
From this brief time of ease,  
A moment’s rest, when overstrained,  
One hurried glimpse of peace ?

No ; while the sun shone kindly o’er us,  
And flowers bloomed round our feet—  
While many a bud of joy before us  
Unclosed its petals sweet—

An unseen work within was plying ;  
Like honey-sucking bee,  
From flower to flower, unwearyed, flying,  
Labored one faculty—

Thoughtful for Winter’s future sorrow,  
Its gloom and scarcity ;  
Prescient to-day of wan to-morrow,  
Toiled quiet Memory.

'Tis she that from each transient pleasure  
Extracts a lasting good ;  
'Tis she that finds, in summer, treasure  
To serve for Winter's food.

And when Youth's summer day is vanished,  
And Age brings Winter's stress,  
Her stores, with hoarded sweets replenished,  
Life's evening hours will bless.

#### WATCHING AND WISHING.

Oh, would I were the golden light  
That shines around thee now,  
As slumber shades the spotless white  
Of that unclouded brow !  
It watches through each changeful dream  
Thy features' varied play ;  
It meets thy waking eyes' soft gleam  
By dawn—by op'ning day.

Oh, would I were the crimson veil  
Above thy couch of snow,  
To dye that cheek so soft, so pale,  
With my reflected glow !  
Oh, would I were the cord of gold  
Whose tassel, set with pearls,  
Just meets the silken cov'ring's fold  
And rests upon thy curls,

Dishevell'd in thy rosy sleep,  
And shading soft thy dreams ;  
Across their bright and raven sweep  
The golden tassel gleams !  
I would be anything for thee,  
My love—my radiant love—  
A flower, a bird, for sympathy,  
A watchful star above.

[From "THE TEACHER'S MONOLOGUE."]

'Tis not the air I wished to play,  
The strain I wished to sing ;  
My wilful spirit slipped away  
And struck another string.  
I neither wanted smile nor tear,  
Bright joy nor bitter woe,  
But just a song that, sweet and clear,  
Though haply sad, might flow.

A quiet song, to solace me  
When sleep refused to come ;  
A strain to chase despondency  
When sorrowful for home.  
In vain I try ; I cannot sing ;  
All feels so cold and dead ;  
No wild distress, no gushing spring  
Of tears in anguish shed ;

But all the impatient gloom of one  
Who waits a distant day,  
When, some great task of suffering done,  
Repose shall toil repay.  
For youth departs, and pleasure flies,  
And life consumes away,  
And youth's rejoicing ardor dies  
Beneath this drear delay ;

And Patience, weary with her yoke,  
Is yielding to despair,  
And Health's elastic spring is broke  
Beneath the strain of care.  
Life will be gone ere I have lived—  
Where now is life's first prime ?  
I've worked and studied, longed and grieved,  
Through all that rosy time.

To toil, to think, to long, to grieve—  
Is such my future fate ?  
The morn was dreary, must the eve  
Be also desolate ?  
Well, such a life at least makes Death  
A welcome, wished-for friend ;  
Then aid me, Reason, Patience, Faith,  
To suffer to the end.